

The Homilist.



Vol. Third Series.



Hugh A. Marshall

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MEZZANINE





# THE HOMILIST.

CONDUCTED BY

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF THE "BIBLICAL LITURGY," "CRISIS OF BEING," "CORE OF CREEDS," "PROGRESS OF BEING," "RESURRECTIONS," &c., &c.

VOL. IV. THIRD SERIES.

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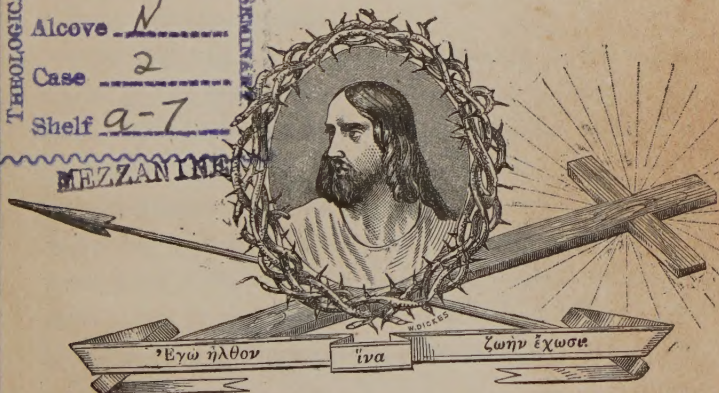
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MEZZANINE



"THE LETTER KILLETH BUT THE SPIRIT GIVETH LIFE."—*Paul.*

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## PREFACE.

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THIS Volume is the fourth of the *Third Series* of the work. The only difference between this and the preceding series, consists in its enlarged size and half-yearly issue.

As the old key-note will still rule the melodies of the "Homilist," and no new specific description is requisite, the fourteen-years-old preface may be again transcribed.

"First: The book has no *finish*. The Editor has not only not the time to give an artistic finish to his productions, but not even the *design*. Their incompleteness is *intentional*. He has drawn some marble slabs together, and hewn them roughly, but has left other hands to delineate minute features, and so polish them into beauty. He has dug up from the Biblical mine some precious ore, smelted a little, but left all the smithing to others. He has presented 'germs,' which, if sown in good soil, under a free air and an open sky, will produce fruit that may draw many famishing spirits into the vineyard of the Church.

"Secondly: The book has no *denominationalism*. It has no special reference to 'our body,' or to 'our Church.' As denominational strength is not necessarily *soul* strength, nor denominational religion necessarily the religion of humanity, it is the aim of the 'Homilist' to minister that which universal man requires. It is for man as a citizen of the universe, and not for him as the limb of a sect.

"Thirdly: The book has no *polemical Theology*. The Editor—holding, as he does, with a tenacious grasp, the *cardinal* doctrines which

constitute what is called the 'orthodox creed'—has, nevertheless, the deep and ever-deepening conviction, first, that such creed is but a very small portion of the truth that God has revealed, or that man requires; and that no theological system can fully represent all the contents and suggestions of the great book of God; and, secondly, that systematic theology is but means to an end. *Spiritual morality is that end.* Consequently, to the *heart and life* every Biblical thought and idea should be directed. Your systems of divinity the author will not disparage; but his impression is, that they can no more answer the purpose of the Gospel, than *pneumatics* can answer the purpose of the atmosphere. In the case of Christianity, as well as the air, the world can live without its scientific truths; but it must have the free flowings of their vital elements. Coleridge has well said, 'Too soon did the doctors of the Church forget that the heart—the moral nature—was the beginning and the end; and that truth, knowledge, and insight were comprehended in its expansion.'

"The Editor would record his grateful acknowledgments to those free spirits of all churches, who have so earnestly rallied round him, to the many who have encouraged him by their letters, and to those, especially, who have aided him by their valuable contributions. May the 'last day' prove that the help rendered has been worthily bestowed; and that the 'Homilist' did something towards the spiritual education of humanity, in its endeavors to bring the Bible, through the instrumentality of the pulpit, into a more immediate and practical contact with the every-day life of man!"

DAVID THOMAS.

Loughborough Park,  
Brixton.



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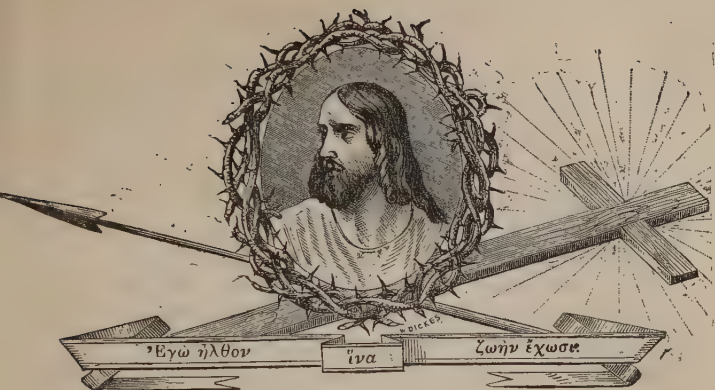
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“The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”—PAUL.

# A HOMILY

ON

## God's Everlasting Salvation.

“Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath : for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner : but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.”—Isa. li. 6.

**T**HESE words are designed to bring comfort to God's people. They are, in numbers, and seemingly in influence, in the minority, and their opinion is but the opinion of the minority.

They believe that the only true, great, and lasting thing in the world is God's salvation ; but there is the decided opinion of an overwhelming majority against them. The world, by its beliefs and practice, says, that the interests of the soul are the most unimportant affairs in the earth. Nearly everybody looks after everything else than those interests. Most people know of God's righteousness in

scarcely any other way than by name, and little or no attention is given by the mass of people to such subjects. What God does for and in man, are things which only a very small part of the world's inhabitants care to think about; and even they often show that the subject has but little interest even to them. The world, as a whole, attaches extremely little importance to Christ's saving process in the soul.

The best among us cannot meet these facts day by day without being influenced by them, and the influence is anything but salutary. It suggests to us the thought, that we may have been using the microscope on that subject, thereby giving it a magnitude it does not possess. Or, if doubt is not raised, despondency and gloom are sure to overcast our spirits. Left to ourselves, or what is as bad, left to the teaching of the world, we see our religious realities becoming faded and dim—our bright hopes of the future assuming a faintness and insignificance which fills us with alarm.

Out of the demeaning and falsifying atmosphere which thus surrounds and threatens to overwhelm us, does God summon us. He commands us to leave the petty judgments and opinions of men far behind; to let our souls taste a little of the grandeur and greatness of starry heavens and wide-spreading earth; to consider that salvation and righteousness are not of the earth, earthy, but have sprung from the source out of which have flowed earth, seas, and skies. Nay, that the fountain of salvation is deeper and more enduring than that of the firm earth and unchanging heavens; that when the pillars of this earthly platform have become so rotten that men can no longer walk thereon; when earth's stage shall fall in one tremendous crash; when the fire of mid-day sun shall be exhausted, and heaven's night-lights shall be extinguished; when nothing remains of the old universe but a faint remnant of the smoke of its destruction;—then shall be shining in unimpaired brilliancy, the righteous God and His saved people. “Lift up,” &c.

Refreshing it is to hear God's voice—clear and distinct—breaking through the confusing din of the world's opinions

and practices, announcing the true position of His Gospel here and hereafter; that it is not of the world, depends not on the world, and shall exist when the world has passed away. God's salvation and righteousness are independent of everything in the world, and everything of the world.

There are brought before us in the text, three great varieties of existence, viz., those of *man*, the *earth*, and the *starry heavens*; and contrasted with *God's salvation and righteousness*.

I. GOD'S SALVATION IS INDEPENDENT OF, AND WILL OUTLIVE, EVERYTHING HUMAN. "When they that dwell therein shall die in like manner," *i.e.*, like the old earth itself. "My salvation shall be for ever." Men have got the notion that religion dies with them. Now, with many things that are connected with religion man has much to do. A great and indispensable work he has to perform, but it is a subordinate one. In the march through the desert, he has upon his shoulders the whole care of the tabernacle and its furniture. Whether it is to be in good or bad repair depends upon him. It cannot be shifted from place to place without much labor on his part, and he must work hard in taking it down and building it up, when and where commanded. The whole means of religious services depend upon him and his punctuality and care. But that is all. The meaning and life of the whole lies far beyond his sphere. That which gives stability to the whole edifice, can neither be taken down nor put up by him; can be neither revealed nor obscured by him. No, for over the heads of priests and Levites, shines the bright presence of Jehovah,—bright when all is dark, or clothed in sombre purple—gliding noiselessly through the calm blue heavens.

Still does the living presence of God's redeeming power float through this world; still does it seek the co-operation of men, in seeking for it temples, even human hearts, to dwell in. But under the control of man it can never be; never will it move according to his whims and fancies.

Strange that men should be found to suppose so ; to suppose that the power of God could be locked and sealed in their ecclesiastical communion, or found only according to the square or plumb of their theological dogmas ; that He who never dwelt exclusively in houses made with hands, can now be pressed within the narrow bounds of a sect or creed. Yet much like this has been the conduct of men. They have done so not out of any evil intention ; rather I imagine with the best intentions. Christianity was not very old, when many of its true disciples thought that, because a few hooks of the tabernacle's curtaining were getting loose, the Shekinah was in danger. Church councils were convened, rigid ecclesiastical formulas were concocted, solemn censures were passed upon all who refused to look after the pins of those curtains ; and all to save the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Then sects arose, each with a different number of golden tacks, or perhaps, outer court posts in its construction ; each charging the other with the want of true religion on account of the said differences. Each forgot, that the free spirit of God stood above and rested upon one and all ; that down upon all their tabernacles the living light of God was shining.

And shine on it would, let men do what they might. Not even upon its most ardent supporters does it depend. We too often yield to the opinion that when this good man, or that clever theologian passes away—that when this zealous party, or that evangelical sect fades and dies, that God's true and powerful presence will be no more seen. How mistaken we are ! How jealous was Moses of the sanctity of Jehovah's presence. Yet Moses passed away, but God's presence was still as sacred. How zealous was Aaron for the holy worship of the sanctuary. Yet the worship remained when Aaron died. Even that tabernacle, where alone it was thought God could be served, passed away ; still shone His presence, and that, too, in a grander house at Jerusalem. And when the great temple itself crumbled to the ground, and men wondered if the Divine presence and power were no more, behold it shone with a new brilliance in a grander temple—His own Son.



Men have too often been faint-hearted for the safety of vital religion. If by true religion they mean this or that human scheme or system of opinions, they have reason to be so ; for let them be assured it shall pass away. But if you look beyond what is human, and have the simple belief that there is such a thing as God's own truth, power, and life, then bid hence doubts and fears. Human theories and Church forms will fade, will pass away ; but God's redeeming mercy will remain in all its purity and power.

Not only is the power of God unto salvation independent of its friends, but unconquerable by its foes. Men have tried to oppose the march of God's kingdom upon earth. "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers took counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed." All they did was to frighten the poor Churches of those days—possibly purge them a little ; for people sought the peace of the Gospel then and after, as much as ever. Then intellectual power tried to turn the truth of God into a lie, played for a while at word-juggling, and spread consternation among a few of the more faint-hearted. Yet the word of Christ lives to-day ; and all that the world knows of these gymnasts, is a few of their tricks which the pages of history have recorded. In their day, they were looked upon as mighty foes and bold destroyers, just as a few of the theories and opinions of the present are thought to endanger the vitality of salvation. Oh ! it is time we had faith in God and His work. Let men "play their fantastic tricks" in or out of religion ; they will do no harm. In a few years they and their tricks will have passed away, and the love of Jesus Christ and the power of God will be ever the same. Men and their opinions grow and decay like the trees of the forest, rise and fall like the tides of the ocean, and the old earth ever remains ; much more the righteousness of God. "All flesh"—its whole paraphernalia, its ways, its thoughts, its loves, its hates—"is as grass, and the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away ; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever."

II. THE GRASS WITHERETH, THE FLOWER FADETH ; AND SO, TOO, WILL THE EARTH OUT OF WHICH THEY SPRING. It "shall wax old like a garment." To the same intent speaks science. The earth has grown like everything else. It, too, shall reach a point of maturity and then slowly descend the path of decay. When we consider how intimately the Christian religion is connected with the events, the places, the form, the history of this earth, we become somewhat curious to know if the two will share the same fate. So intimately connected are they that the one was made for the other. We are told that not only were all things made by Jesus Christ, but also for Him. This earthly scene was planned and decorated, to show through His a Father's sacrificing love. Accordingly, He wove into His whole teaching the facts of nature and the events of society. He made nature speak much of the message He had to bring to man. The lily as it nodded in the breeze ; the sower as he scattered the grain ; the sheep browsing on the hill-side, and the net of the fisher on the sea-shore, uttered each its own part of His message. The fierce hurricane of midnight and the thunder-storm of mid-day also told for Jesus Christ their tale to the world. So much so, that up to the present day almost all our religion seems to be inextricably interwoven with surrounding nature. We have often to go there for testimonies to its genuineness, for explanation of its truths, and for application of its doctrines.

But the time will come when this earth "shall wax old like a garment." Will religion wax old too? When the aged planet's voice is low and indistinct, will the truth of God also be less clear and defined? When the old earth can no longer yield fair lilies, nor even thirty-fold to the sower ; when all its works, instead of showing order and harmony, look worn and used-up ; the machinery working slower and signs of dissolution multiplying ; when its lessons are no longer true and its instructions no longer edifying ; when this part of God's revelation becomes lame and useless—will His truth have become any more obscure or His Gospel more

unintelligible? I trow not. The world, in its youth and beauty, was but a great symbol. The symbol is gone; the truth remains. Already, men are telling us that the earth is not what it was once thought to be; that there was no universal flood; that it was not created in six days; that it is more than six thousand years old. Be it so. These are only a few details about the coat of many colors—they touch not the living heart beneath. Let that many colored symbol fade and pass away, yet the great spiritual life that dwelt beneath throbs strong as ever.

The time may come when the resources of earth may be dried up; not so the resources of Heaven. There may be no sunshine to cheer the earth; there will be sunshine for the hearts of men;—no dew to refresh a thirsty earth; there will be life-giving dew for the soul of man. Earth may have lost her scenes of beauty and places of delight; but for the weary son of man, there will be the unfading glory and charms of the Son of God.

Let the last day come, with its weapons of destruction to toss aside the old earth and all that is upon it. Let its death-throes shake to the foundations every house of prayer, every benevolent institution, every edifice that has been raised by enterprise for Christian objects. Let tract societies, Bible societies, missionary societies, all be swept away with the besom of destruction, and all religious books sent up in one great flame. Let the last day come, when never more shall be heard the chime of the Sabbath bell; when the last word of the preacher shall have been uttered, and the last Sabbath spent; when all creeds, all sects, all theologies are at an end; when the wondrous land on which a Redeemer's feet trod is no more; no Bethlehem, no Jerusalem, no Calvary. Yet that, of which all these were but the outer covering, still exists; that, for which all Christian institutions were reared, for which the Sabbath bell chimed, of which the preacher spoke, upon which all creeds and beliefs were founded—the salvation of men through Jesus Christ, shines brighter than ever. Draw aside the curtain, and as far as the eye can reach, you behold a multitude which no man can number—

the redeemed children of the old earth. There, too, is the heavenly and eternal Jerusalem; there is the Babe of Bethlehem and the Lamb of Calvary in the midst. Let the old rag of a tattered earth fly now, at its will, through space. Its work is done. Upon its platform hath God redeemed His people, and they reign kings and priests for ever.

III. OVER THE WHOLE EARTH BROODS THE MIGHTY LAW OF CHANGE. Everywhere there are births and dissolutions. Almost everything yields to its power.<sup>1</sup> From the tiny flower, to the huge mountain; from the life of the insect that is born and dies in a day, to the life of men, of nations, of the whole world. The dominion of the changeable, however, is not confined to this world; it extends to all worlds. Like a huge, universal canker, it makes blots on the brightest suns, unfixes fixed stars, and in its slow march, through incalculable myriads of ages, shall extinguish one by one those countless lights of the midnight firmament. The time will come when not only the earth but the heavens shall grow old; when the celestial fires shall burn more dimly; when system after system shall pass away; when throughout the great firmament there shall be seen no longer the endless array of the sparkling gems of countless worlds, only a little far-off smoke, or a few faint streaks of the dying embers of a dead universe.

And why should it remain any longer when a grander universe has begun? The work of the old one is done. It came into being only to speak the great truths of God. It has done so; let it pass. Its bright suns, the centres of life and light, all spoke of one Eternal Sun from whom comes all life and all light. Its planets, each in its appointed orbit, each with its own work to do, each with its own size and form, each depending upon the one centre, all sung of the true life of man, that its course is only along one path, and that path only and always around one centre. The old universe came speaking of better things to come. Its fading glory spoke of an eternal glory; its changing light of an unchanging light; its meagre life of a fulness of life. But now, *that* glory is attained, *that* light now shines; *that*

life now lives. The scattered, wandering sons of earth have all come back to their centre—all revolve in a true orbit. Let the changing, decaying systems of the old universe now disappear ; their existence would be but a mockery beside the one everlasting system of Righteousness. Let all that must pass away now pass. The watchword is, "For ever and ever," for ever one system, one will, one obedience, one atmosphere of love.

"Unto what," said our Lord, "shall we liken the kingdom of God?" Unto a grain of mustard seed put into the earth. The least of all seeds, it groweth up the greatest of all herbs. I know not what could have had a smaller beginning, or to the eye of man a meaner origin than the Gospel of Jesus Christ upon earth—the least of all seeds planted. But it has grown ; it still struggles to grow in your hearts, in the heart of the world. It shall grow and live to tower above and beyond the world ; to grow when all things else fade ; to flourish in perennial beauty when all things else are crushed in the grasp of death.

There is in every one a desire to have a part in that immortality ; a desire to be connected with that strong arm that can raise him safe out of the wrecks of ages. When it utters itself in your heart, do not crush it down. It is the still small voice of your immortal spirit telling you that it is not connected with the passing things of earth, but with that righteousness and salvation which shall outlive them all. To give you that germ of immortality has Jesus Christ come. Accept of the salvation He offers you, and you will then have implanted within you God's righteousness, which will be a light to guide you in this dark world ; an ark of safety when the last flood of destruction envelopes the earth ; an everlasting rock in the presence of God, where you may repose in peace and safety for ever.\*

DAVID JOHNSON, M.A.

\* This Sermon was delivered in the ordinary course of the ministry of the late gifted Pastor of Castle Street Congregational Church, Dundee. He died at the early age of twenty-five, but has left proofs of his success as a student and of his high qualifications to do service to the Christian Church.



# A Homiletic Glance at the Acts of the Apostles.

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Able expositions of the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, describing the manners, customs, and localities described by the inspired writers ; also interpreting their words, and harmonizing their formal discrepancies, are, happily, not wanting amongst us. But the eduction of its WIDEST truths and highest suggestions is still a felt desideratum. To some attempt at the work we devote these pages. We gratefully avail ourselves of all exegetical helps within our reach ; but to occupy our limited space with any lengthened archæological, geographical, or philological remarks, would be to miss our aim ; which is not to make bare the mechanical process of the study of Scripture, but to reveal its spiritual results.

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## SECTION ELEVENTH.—Acts iv. 1—22.

“And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day : for it was now eventide. Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed ; and the number of the men was about five thousand. And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, and Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this ? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole ; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled ; and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, What shall we do to these men ? for that indeed a notable



miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done. For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed."—Acts iv. 1—22.

SUBJECT:—*The Miracle at "The Beautiful Gate," a Fact, a Text, and an Epoch.*

(Continued from page 322, Vol. XIV.)

**T**HIS *first* miracle, wrought by the apostles within the precincts of the temple, we have already noticed as a *fact*, and as a *text*. We have now to consider it as an *EPOCH*. The discourse which Peter delivered upon it as a text, woke impulses and started efforts both amongst the adherents and opponents of the new religion, that introduced, in some respects, a new order of things. It led to the first assault upon the Christian Church; it brought the new faith into a violent conflict with the formalism of the Pharisee, the infidelity of the Sadducee, and the craft of priestly rule; and thus demonstrated its power to battle successfully with all the evils it is missioned to destroy. In looking at it as an epoch, we discover two things:—*A new impulse to the world's antagonism to Christianity, and a new demonstration of God's power in Christianity.*

I. A NEW IMPULSE TO THE WORLD'S ANTAGONISM TO CHRISTIANITY. Observe three things:—

First: The *representatives* of the antagonism. Who were those who now stood forward as the representatives of the world against the Church—as the defenders of the false in theory, and the corrupt in practice? The first verse answers the question. "The priests, and the captain of the temple,

and the Sadducees." The first represent religion, the second government, the third scepticism. Here you have, therefore, religion, politics, and infidelity, coming forth to crush the young Church. The hostile sections of a wicked world are every ready to merge their differences in an attack upon the divinely pure and good. Pilate and Herod become friends in their endeavor to crush the Divine. Observe—

Secondly : The *reason* of this antagonism. What roused this opposition ? The second verse furnishes the reply. "Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." Bengel and others see different motives at work in these assailants. The priests were "grieved," because these apostles should presume to teach, and thus arrogate their peculiar office. The captain of the temple was "grieved," because social tranquillity was disturbed and the public peace in danger. The Sadducees were "grieved," because they proclaimed a resurrection of the dead, a dogma which they repudiated. Wicked men hate truth for different reasons, and according to their passions and interests. Observe—

Thirdly : The *development* of this antagonism. The persecutors do three things. (1) They *imprison* the apostles. "And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day : for it was now eventide." It would seem that it was too late in the day to hold a court in order formally to try their conduct. It was, perhaps, if not unlawful, inconvenient to assemble the Sanhedrim at such a late hour in the day. They were, therefore, put in safe keeping until the morning. So strong had the feeling of hostility to the teachings of these apostles and dread of their influence grown in all classes, that they could not wait until the morning. Their endurance was exhausted ; and they seized the apostles at once, dragged them from their sphere of influence, deprived them of their liberty, and confined them in prison during the night. (2) They *arraigned* the apostles. "And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, and Annas the high priest," &c. The word

“rulers” is, perhaps, to be taken in a generic sense, comprehending both the elders and the scribes—the one class distinguished by the dignity of age, and the other by that of occupation as transcribers and interpreters of the Jewish law. The Sanhedrim consisted of about seventy members, and before them the apostles were now brought. Some of their names are here mentioned. “Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest.” Though Caiaphas was actually the high priest, yet it is probable that Annas, on account of his having occupied that position for a considerable time, and by reason of his age, and the fact of his having had several of his sons in that lofty position, was now called upon to act in that capacity, and sat as president of the court. The form in which the Sanhedrim sat, was that of a semi-circle; the president, the high priest, at the head. Now the apostles were set in the “midst” of them, that is—in the area surrounded by the seats of the members. There they stand, and the question is put to them—“*By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?*” The question assumes their belief in the miracle. The fact that a miracle had been wrought in the man, was beyond all dispute. Their question was, with what power they did it. The conclusion which they undoubtedly sought to reach was, that it was by some diabolical influence. Probably they expected that the two poor, unlearned Galileans would be intimidated by such a question as they stood in the presence of such an august assembly. Though this question is all that they are reported to have addressed to the apostles, it is probable that much more was said on the occasion. Peter’s reply, which we shall notice in the sequel, seems to have silenced and confounded them. (3) They *threatened* the apostles. “And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.” Their command, we may rest assured, was enforced by many a terrible threat. Imprisonment, torture, and death, were, in all probability, held forth to their view as the results of disobedience.

Such, in brief, is the reported antagonism which Peter's discourse upon this miracle awoke against himself and colleague. It was strong in its spirit, but futile in its efforts. In sooth, all endeavors to crush truth are vain, fruitless, and self-confounding.

“ Truth, crush'd to earth, shall rise again ;  
 The eternal years of God are hers.  
 While Error, wounded, writhes in pain,  
 And dies amidst her worshippers.”

II. A NEW DEMONSTRATION OF GOD'S POWER IN CHRISTIANITY. The fierce opposition, instead of retarding the progress of Christianity, quickens its speed ; instead of enfeebling its energy, evolves its victorious powers. We see its power here—

First : *In multiplying its adherents.* “Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed ; and the number of the men was about five thousand.” “Howbeit ;”—*notwithstanding* the persecution, the Divine cause advanced. Though the clouds gather and thicken into blackness, the sun rises. The tides flow, though the force of the mightiest tempest bears against them ; and God's truth moves on to universal empire, though earth and hell combine against it. “Howbeit”—*because*, not only despite the persecution did many which heard the word believe, but perhaps *because* of it. Persecution does two things which give an impulse to the cause of the Christian martyr. It presents on the one side such a hideous manifestation of evil as produces a social recoil, and on the other such an exhibition of Christian goodness in the spirit and conduct of the sufferers as awakens social sympathy and admiration. As the aromatic plant sends forth its sweetest odours by pressure, so the Christian character gains charm by its suffering. As the stars can only shine in the night, so the brightest virtues can only shine in trial. In this way, the blood of the martyr has often been the seed of the Church. We see its power here—

Secondly : *In strengthening its advocates.* With what a sublime power did it invest the apostles on this occasion ? A power which enabled them heroically to expound their

cause, thoroughly confound their enemies, and invincibly pursue their mission. They *heroically* expound their cause. They stand as prisoners in the midst of this august assembly—the great council of the nation—and the question is put to them, “By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?” and instead of being overawed or intimidated, Peter stands forth, “filled with the Holy Ghost,” and addresses them with a heroism more than human. “Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole ; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” In this short address, he states three things that were adapted and undoubtedly intended to awaken within them the profoundest moral concern. (1) That the said miracle was wrought by Him whom they had crucified. “*Jesus Christ of Nazareth,*” a name which you despise, as if Peter had said, and whom ye crucified, is the name of Him by whom this wonder is effected. (2) That He whom they had crucified had become pre-eminent in the universe. “This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.” Peter borrows his words from Psalm cxviii. 22. They were the professed builders of the great temple of religion, but the chief stone for the building they had rejected. This was their folly and their crime. What they had rejected God had honored. Observe—(1) That men in their enterprises often reject the Divine. (2) That though they reject the Divine, the Divine shall be honored at last to their confusion. (3) That He whom they had crucified was the only One that could save them. “Neither is there salvation in any other.” They needed salvation. Salvation



could be obtained through Christ *exclusively*. Such is the substance of Peter's address to this august assembly, his judges. It contains no word of apology, no hint of conciliation. He does not crouch as a menial before his master, or as a culprit before the administrators of justice. Nay, he offers no word of defence for himself; but with a clearness that could not be mistaken, and a directness that could not be evaded, he charges on them, his judges, the greatest crime that had ever been committed. In that court he stands clothed with the power of God. We see its power—

Thirdly: *In confounding its enemies*. Four effects seem to have been produced upon the enemies.

First: *They were astonished*. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." They marvelled at the "boldness," that is, the *fluency* or ready utterance of these men, for such is the meaning of the word translated "boldness." It is true they were brave in speaking such things on such an occasion; but the fluent way in which such men on this occasion spoke, struck their hearers with amazement. Instead of a nervous hesitancy in their speech, there was a bold flow of language. Two things would heighten their astonishment. (1) The intellectual and social position of the men. "They perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men." An unhappy translation, this, (*αγράμματοί*) *illiterate*, uneducated in that Rabbinical knowledge which the Jews regarded as the most important; (*ιδιωται*) men in a private station, without professional knowledge.\* These men had the instincts of the pedant. Pedants in every age, consider those illiterate that do not know exactly that branch of learning in which they pride themselves. The linguist regards that man as illiterate who understands not the languages he does, though he may know a hundred times as much of God's universe as he. Peter and John were not up in Rabbinical law, but they had a

\* Webster and Wilkinson.



far deeper knowledge of the government of God than the most learned of the Rabbis. The men who delivered such speeches and wrote such letters as did Peter and John, were no illiterate men. They had not received, it is true, the education of sophists and casuists, but they had received the teachings of Christ. Nor were they "ignorant." The word "ignorant," should have been rendered "common men," "laymen." The astonishment was, that those apostles who had never graduated in their schools, and who sustained no office in their institutions, but were private men, should speak with such fluency and force. The other thing that heightened their astonishment was—(2) The connection of the men with Christ. "They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." They recognized them as those who had been with Jesus, as His companions and disciples. This would only heighten their astonishment ; for how could they understand that men who had been the companions of Jesus of Nazareth, the carpenter's son, the blasphemer, the malefactor, who had been crucified as a public offender, could speak in this way.

Secondly: *They were silenced.* "And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it." Facts are stubborn things. There was the man who had been a cripple for forty years, standing side by side with the apostles, vigorous in body and with full use of limb. There was the fact in all its reality before them. What could they say? There was no denying it! The way to silence the enemies of Christianity is not by endeavouring to expose the fallacy of their objections, and logically involve them in absurdity, nor by declaring with a pious horror against their infidelities, but by presenting to them the triumphs that Christianity has achieved, show them the facts. Show them the morally blind who have been made to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk—show them the moral cripples that have been restored ;—this will silence them.

Thirdly: *They were perplexed.* They felt that something must be done to prevent the influence of these apostles

spreading, and thus undermining their authority, and shaking the conventional faith. "But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus." Everything recorded in these words shows their perplexity. They were at their wits' end. (1) They command the apostles "to go aside out of the council." (2) They then confer "among themselves," as to what is to be done. (3) They then resolve to "threaten them." (4) They then command the apostles "not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus." What a humiliating position for the great council of the nation to be placed in! What a sight. Seventy at least of a nation's magnates and magistrates, confounded by two poor men whom they considered illiterate and ignorant! It is Heaven's eternal law that the men who perversely struggle against the truth, shall involve themselves in inextricable bewilderments.

Fourthly: *They were thwarted.* "But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people; for all men glorified God for that which was done." The address of Peter and John at this point involves three grand truths—(1) That the will of God is the imperial rule of life. The rule is to obey God rather than man, in any capacity, or under any circumstance—man, either as a parent, a prince, monarch, or emperor. God's will is above the united will of nations, or hierarchies, or worlds. (2) That universal conscience gives its sanction to the supreme law. "Judge ye." The apostle felt that

his judges, one-sided, prejudiced, and corrupt as they were, had still within them that conscience that would compel them to the truth that God was to be obeyed rather than man. How beautifully Socrates is supposed to express this: "You, O Athenians, I embrace and love; but I will obey God more than you." (3) That Gospel truth, when truly felt in the soul, is an irrepressible force. "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Men may repress mathematical doctrines, and truths of natural and abstract science, but such is the relation of Gospel truth to the profoundest sympathies of the human heart, to the most vital interests of the human soul, that when they are truly felt, they must find utterance; "Necessity is laid upon me," says Paul.

The Sanhedrim, having heard this address of wondrous point and power, felt themselves powerless in their endeavor to crush the apostles. "So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done." They could not *punish* them, either because their consciences had been so touched by the address that they were self-prevented, or because the people were so thoroughly in sympathy with their work, that they were afraid to punish lest they should awaken public indignation. The latter reason is assigned; perhaps both operated. Anyhow, the Sanhedrim was so far thwarted. Truth ever has, and always will, thwart the purposes of its opponents.

In conclusion, two remarkable things should be, perhaps, hastily noticed before closing this section of apostolic history.

First: *The wonderful improvement in the character of Peter.* A few weeks before this, we find this Peter close to the spot in which he now stood, and in the hearing of the very men whom he now confronted,—with a base cowardice, denying all knowledge of the Son of God; but now he is invincible. The enemies of Christ he looks in the eye, he addresses, he charges with crime, with a courage that is unconquerable and majestic. How this change—this rapid improvement? He has been

thrown upon his own resources ; he has been studying the Scriptures in the light of Christ's history ; he has been earnest in prayer ; and he has received the Holy Ghost. His present position shows the truth of what Christ had taught, that "it was expedient for him that he should go away." The other remarkable thing which deserves notice here, is—

Secondly : *The difference in the effect of Peter's discourse on this occasion to that which took place under his sermon on the day of Pentecost.* Under his discourse on the day of Pentecost, which occurred just before, multitudes were pricked to the heart, and thousands were converted to God ; but no such effect as this seems to have taken place under the discourses which he delivered on the occasion of this miracle. The same facts are stated, the same truths are brought forth, with the same burning fervor and unflinching fidelity, and yet there is no record of one conversion. There is wonder and perplexity, and that is all ; no repentance. Why the difference ? May not the cause be found in the different character of the audiences ?



## Germ of Thought.

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SUBJECT :—*The Rectitude of God.*

"Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."—Rev. xv. 3.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Fifty-fourth.

**G**OD is righteous. The text is a jubilant testimony of the redeemed in heaven to the righteousness of God.

I. THE DEMANDS OF HIS LAW ATTEST THE TRUTH OF THIS TESTIMONY. The Heavenly Teacher has reduced all the demands which the Eternal Governor makes upon us, to a twofold command.

First: "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,*" &c. His demand is our supreme love. Is this demand just? This depends upon three things. (1) Whether we have the power of loving anyone supremely. (2) Whether God has attributes adapted to awaken this love within us. (3) Whether these attributes are revealed with sufficient clearness to our minds. The affirmative to these things must be admitted by all. All men do love some object supremely. The Eternal has attributes suited to call forth the paramount affection. Nature and the Bible radiate those attributes in every variety of aspect and attraction. The Heavenly Teacher has reduced the demands to another command—

Secondly: "*Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you.*" Not "*whatsoever men do unto you,*" that might be sinful; but *whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you.* Would you have them false, dishonest, unkind, tyrannic, towards you? *Whatsoever ye would that they should be to you, be so to them.* Can anything be more just?

II. THE INTUITIONS OF HIS MORAL CREATURES ATTEST THE TRUTH OF THIS TESTIMONY. In all moral intelligences there is—

First: *An intuitive sense of the right.* All have an inbred sentiment of right and wrong. This sentiment implies a moral standard; and what is that standard but God?

Secondly: *There is an intuitive love of the right.* All moral souls love the right in the abstract; they are bound to do it. "I delight in the law of God after the inner man." All consciences go with God.

Thirdly: *There is an intuitive remorse.* Misery springs up in the soul from a conscious departure from the right. Cain, David, Belshazzar, Judas, are examples.

Fourthly: *There is an intuitive appeal to God under the wrong as the Friend of the right.* Oppressed humanity involuntarily looks to God as Judge of all the earth. Deep in the soul of the moral creation is the feeling that God's ways

are just and right. No argument can destroy this consciousness.

III. THE MEDIATION OF HIS SON ATTESTS THE TRUTH OF THIS TESTIMONY. Christ came to establish judgment, rectitude, in the earth. "What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

First: *His life was the development of Divine righteousness.* He was incarnate rectitude. "He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."

Secondly: *His death was the highest homage to Divine rectitude.* He could have escaped death. It was the inner sense of right that urged Him on.

Thirdly: *His system is the promoter of Divine righteousness.* His truth inculcates it; His Spirit promotes it. His Spirit comes to "convince the world of sin, righteousness," &c.

IV. THE RETRIBUTIONS OF HIS GOVERNMENT ATTEST THE TRUTH OF THIS TESTIMONY. Look at the expulsion of Adam, the deluge, the burning of Sodom, the extermination of the Canaanites, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews. Look on to the retribution of the last day, and see what rectitude marks the whole. (Matt. xxv.)

God is righteous. Some may doubt it, and others may declare that His "ways are not equal;" but those who know Him best, the holy and sanctified intelligences of heaven, chant it evermore in the ear of the universe, as a verity at once the most obvious and delightful.





SUBJECT :—*History of a Property.*

“And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took council, and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord appointed me.”—Matt. xxvii. 6—10.

## Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Fifty-fifth.

**F**EW subjects are more worthy of an historic treatment than that of human property. To take the secular property which any man holds, and expound the way in which it has been acquired, how it is employed, the influence it exerts upon its possessor, its general bearings, would be to reveal many principles, both in human nature and in the Divine government, of great interest and importance.

The histories of wars, philosophies, scientific discoveries, and religions, which abound, do not and cannot exactly present those phases of truth which are developed in the history of a man’s worldly fortune. The passage before us presents, as the prominent subject, the property of Judas; and its history may be fairly taken as the history of the property of thousands in every age and land.

I. WE SEE IT HERE DESCENDING AS THE LEGACY OF CRIME. “*And the chief priests took the silver pieces.*” (1) The silver pieces were once the property of Judas. They were in his hands; and at first, no doubt, he rejoiced in them as his own. (2) He acquired this property by wickedness. It was his reward for betraying the Son of God. “*What will ye give me?*” This was his avaricious question. He sacrificed principle for property, his Lord for lucre. (3) The wickedness with which he acquired this property threw him into an intolerable remorse. Under the accusations of his conscience, his

existence became unbearable, and he destroyed himself. (4) This property falls into the hands of the very men from whom he had obtained it ; it ruined him, he dies, and he leaves it behind him as the legacy of a tremendous crime. How many fortunes held by the men of this age are the legacies of crime !

II. WE SEE IT HERE INHERITED AS A SOURCE OF ANXIETY. These silver pieces coming into the hands of the chief priests filled them with strange solicitude ; they knew not what to do with them. (1) Their consciences would not allow them to retain them for their own personal use. They felt that they had used this money as a bribe to tempt Judas to a tremendous crime, and that it had come back to them red-hot with avenging justice. Bad as they were, their consciences were not utterly steeled. (2) Their religion would not allow them to devote it to the temple. "It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, for it is the price of blood." The treasury was the chest in the court of the women, for receiving the offerings of worshippers. These technical and hypocritical religionists found the law against putting such money into the treasury of the temple in Deut. xxiii. 18. Thus this money gave them great anxiety ; something, they felt, must be done with it, but what ? that was the question ; they could not keep it. Money is often a troublesome possession.

III. WE SEE IT HERE EMPLOYED AS AN EXPIATORY GIFT. "And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in." This field was near Jerusalem, and had been used for making earthenware. We are not told the size. The probability is, that it was of but little value. They bought it as a cemetery for such persons as died at Jerusalem, and did not belong to it. Perhaps the *Ξένοι*, for whom the field was purchased, were foreign Jews who attended the festivals. "In the time of Jerome, the poorest outcasts were buried there" (Webster and Wilkinson). That there was no real charity in this act is clear from the fact that Providence brands the field with a name that stand for ages

as a memorial of their crime. "Wherefore that field was called the field of blood, unto this day." No; they bought this "old exhausted clay-pit," not from any humane sentiment, or generous impulse, but to atone, if possible, their consciences. How much money, in all ages, has been contributed to the cause of religion and philanthropy with the sole view of expiation.

IV. WE SEE IT HERE OVERRULED AS THE INSTRUMENT OF PROVIDENCE. There is a Providence over all; originating the good and subordinating the evil. Hence the act of these wicked men in purchasing the field, fulfilled an old prophecy. "Thén was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me." This is a quotation, not from Jeremiah, but from Zech. xi. 12, 13. The exact language is not given, but the application of the idea is made. The reason why Jeremiah is given instead of Zechariah, is a question which has received different explanations. The most satisfactory seems to be this, that Jeremiah standing first in the Rabbinical order of prophets, gave a title to the whole series.

Wicked men, however uncontrolled in their wickedness, are always made the instruments in working out the Divine arrangements.



SUBJECT:—*The Communion of Saints.*—No. II.

"Honour all men. Love the brotherhood."—1 Peter ii. 17.

*Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Fifty-sixth.*

**I**N my last homily, I tried to point out what might be looked upon as some of the parts of that communion of saints, in which—in the Apostles' Creed or elsewhere—we profess our belief. Looking about us for the outward emblems of that communion, I reminded you how, through all the

ages of the Christian era, king and priest, noble and peasant, sage and hermit, martyr and bishop, had all passed through the mystic waters of baptism ; that thus all Christians had been bound into one communion and fellowship in Him, who is Head over all for the sake of His body, that is, the Church.

Passing on, then, to higher ground, I suggested that the communion thus begun in baptism, was carried on and wrought closer in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the emblem of entrance and admission ; the Lord's Supper, of continuance and renewal. Turning your thoughts to the days that are gone, I bade you remember the long line of spiritual ancestors who, with us, had partaken of the sacred feast ever and again prepared for us in Christ's Church. They, from that holy table, went to all the noblest deeds and holiest lives in the world's history. So, too, ye should gladly come, and get the strength they got, the fire that burned in them ; and emulous of like noble names, go forth to do *your* duty as Christians.

But, as I then said, our communion, to be true, must be not outward only, but spiritual too. It must be a communion of, and in that Spirit, who from Adam until now, has wrought in human hearts, and been the living breath of all true life. We are members of a royal knighthood. What, then, are our duties ? One for daily life is—"Honour all men. Love the brotherhood."

I. "HONOUR ALL MEN." These words, addressed as they are to Christians, plainly teach that any distinction or separation, which may be connected with the Christian communion, does not divide us from truest interest in, from real regard to, our fellow-men, even when they do not, like us, partake in Christian communion. While it is ours to say, "I am a Christian, and esteem that above all earthly gain," this does not annul that other sentiment of the Roman poet—

"I am a man, and think nought human without interest for me."

And why is this ? The answer is one on the surface. It meets us in the first sentence of the Lord's Prayer—"Our Father."

Though God is, in a special and fullest sense, the Father of Christians, yet He is, too, the Father of all men, as also one of the heathen poets sang—

“For we even are His offspring.”

And it is here we find the points of contact with the good of heathendom: they groped after, and felt there was, a universal Father—one God. As thus human, then—fellow-children with them of one Creature-Father—we are by St. Peter urged to honor *all* men. Our separation as Christians is from the *evil* in them, in the world, in themselves. Our communion with them is as *men*, as children, of one Father. They were and are, so to say, pictures by the same Great Master; the picture may not have been brought under the renovating power of the Divine Spirit; but the work of the Master is there—blurred it may be and soiled, but still, like ourselves, His work.

But how does this bear upon daily life? In this way. Are we not all too liable, nay often ready, to ridicule or make light of, or esteem meanly, those in whom we see some points of inferiority to ourselves—weaknesses of body or mind, peculiarities, &c., &c. Now I hold that St. Peter teaches us, on the ground of our Christian communion, *as Christians*, to avoid all this. Whoever they are, whatever their defects, their creed, their color, their social position, their dress—in short, in whatever point they are deficient, we are to honor them. “*Honour all men.*” And to take the weakest or the worst of them, is there *not* something to honor? What of their body? At the worst, what a marvellous frame! What of the mind? A wondrous tenant of a wondrous home.

Every man, at his worst, *is* an object of honor. He is the workmanship of our Father; the redeemed of our Head; he may be the sanctified of the Sanctifier. Let us beware, how, in estimating our fellows, we forget this; at all events, St. Peter’s rule must have as much weight with us, as prejudices of class, of creed, of race, of training and education. In all men there is something to honor; take this something and put it in one of the scales of your judgment, in passing

sentence on any man. Further, we Christians are bound not only to honor men, as men—that is, as God’s creation—but also to pay to them all the honor they may claim from social position, for Christianity no more separates between its professors and men, *as citizens*, than it does between its professors and men, *as men*. Nothing, to my mind, is plainer than this ; a verse from the chapter of my text will illustrate this : “Submit yourselves (says St. Peter) to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake.” Hence it is that Christianity tends to the maintenance of civil order and due social subordination. For such commands, as these of St. Peter, plainly teach this ; those who think they see an opposition between positive commands and their *notions*, are bound, in Christian obedience to such commands, to examine very carefully their notions in any particular case, and make sure that these notions—that is, their own interpretations of right—are no less plainly a Divine command than the downright positive law or laws they are going to transgress. As Christians, they are bound to ask themselves, “Is my interpretation of my duty in this case as certainly true, *as it is certainly true* that I am commanded to obey every institution of man ? Is it as certainly and undeniably right, as it is undeniably my duty to obey, to honor, to reverence ?” If the supposed duty is not thus clearly and *indisputably* the direction of God, then how can we, as Christians, go against teaching so plain, so unmistakeable ? “*Honour all men !*” How can we, how do we honor them, if we disobey them, refuse them their due, or think lightly of their wishes ? But I must come to the second part of my text—

II. “LOVE THE BRETHREN.” For us, the circumference of this command is infinitely wider than in St. Peter’s time. Then it was like the first ripple-ring made by a stone thrown into the water. Comparatively few and unknown, the brethren had much need of mutual love and help. But the number grew ; and now we call England Christian. Who, then, are our brethren, in St. Peter’s sense ? Here, it may be,



our notions will differ. My opinion is, that all who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth would have been brethren with St. Peter. So far, then, as those with whom we come in contact are brethren—that is, Christians, believers in and baptized into Christ—it is our duty to love them *as such*. In whatever other relation, or position, they stand to us, this duty must enter into and modify our feelings toward them. And does not this, *for us*, add strength, increased strength, to the first part of the text. We are to honor all men, as men, as citizens, as members of society : and at the same time we are to love all brethren—as Christians. To St. Peter, these classes—citizens, Christians,—would present themselves, not only as distinct objects of thought, but also to a great extent distinct *in fact*. But to us here in England this is not so much so. The citizens and Christians are united. We then are bound to unite the love and honor. And so far as we believe any of our friends, parents, rulers, monarchs, to be Christians indeed—judged charitably, after the Bible fashion—then we are bound not only to honor them in their several stations, but to add to that honor *love* ; both to honor and love, to obey and love. I cannot go into particulars as to the way in which we are to show our love to particular classes of our particular brethren. This is, to a great extent, a question for each man's own judgment ; yet I may throw out a hint or two of a negative rather than a positive kind—hints against two extremes. As Christians, we ought to be on our guard against leaving out of the range of our Christian love those near to us. Christian love is for husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, master and servant. It should be like a current of air to fan the warmth of the affection, already lighted by birth, association, or gratitude. Christian love does not ignore human ties ; it purifies, exalts, and gives them new strength—a strength of patience, sweetness, endurance, because it is strength from above.

But your Christian love must not end in the circle immediately about you. Charity *does* begin at home ; *but* it does

not end there. You must look on yourselves each as centres of many circles, with the same centre, but different radii—as centres of many concentric circles. And there is plenty of need of more Christian love of this sort, as there is of the home Christian love ; and we may all, without wasting our energies by diffusiveness, think of those outside the inmost circle, and sometimes let our Christian love *work* as well as think. Avoid both extremes. Never forget to cultivate Christian love for those immediately tied to you ; at the same time do all you can, whenever you can, in whatever way you can, for all Christians who are oppressed by any weight, be it of sin, or poverty, or want, or sickness. Remember, there are such things about us ; and then—called as you are by the name of Him who made us render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s ; of Him who healed all manner of infirmity, and pitied all sorrow ; who Himself obeyed every ordinance of man, submitting Himself even to death ; called by His name—“ Honour all men, love the brotherhood,” even as He loved and honored them in earnest, thoughtful, patient, self-denying action and life. Amen. F. HEPPENSTALL, B.A.



SUBJECT:—*The Still Small Voice : or, the Power of Silent Influence.*

“And after the fire a still small voice.”—1 Kings xix. 12.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Fifty-seventh.

**H**OLY men have their moments of distressing sadness. This is touchingly illustrated in the history of the prophet Elijah. Though eminently a “man of God,” he was occasionally greatly influenced by external circumstances. He who single-handed and alone, could boldly face his bitterest enemies—Ahab and the high priests of Baal—was seen fleeing from the presence of a woman, and concealing himself in a distant cave. These words refer to an incident of great importance. While the prophet, in this solitary retreat, was indulging in a train of gloomy and desponding

thoughts, an old familiar voice fell on his ears. "The word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, what doest thou here, Elijah?" This, pointed question startled him, changed the current of his thoughts, and he attempted to defend himself; but he was ordered to "Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord." He instantly obeyed; and scenes the most sublime successively presented themselves to his view. "And behold the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice." These were pure physical appearances. The wind, earthquake, and fire were illustrative of the *power* of God; and the "still small voice" was indicative of His gracious *presence*. When it fell on the prophet's ears, "he wrapped his face in his mantle," as expressive of deep and profound reverence.

The subject which this portion of Scripture appears to present to our view is, *the power of silent influence*. We shall make three remarks relative to this power.

I. IT IS A POWER WHICH GOD USUALLY EMPLOYS TO ACCOMPLISH HIS WORK. Though God sometimes employs "the wind, the earthquake, the fire," to accomplish His designs, these are not His most powerful agents. They are used only to prepare the way for the "still small voice," that potent, silent influence which pervades all His works. This power of silent influence, God employs in a variety of operations.

First: *In the government of the material world*. How noiselessly does He work the great machinery of Nature! There is not a sound to be heard. Poets talk of the "*music of the spheres*;" but it is a music that has never fallen on their ears. The stupendous worlds which appear to us like lamps in the firmament, move silently in their orbits without noise or confusion. The whole physical universe is held together by an invisible silent force—a force infinitely more powerful

than that of the stormy wind, the terrible earthquake, or the devouring flames—the force of *gravity*. This mighty power pervades all nature, guides the stars in their courses, weighs the mountains in balances, and gently rocks the cradle of the ocean. Yet how silently it does its work !

Secondly : *In the dispensation of Providence*. We sometimes imagine we hear nothing but the stormy wind, or the terrible earthquake, levelling to the ground all our hopes. The fire of Divine disapprobation seems to rage most fiercely, and we feel ready to perish. But these are not the chief agents employed by our Father in the dispensation of His Providence. “After the fire a still small voice.” Pious Eli for a time could see nothing but the fierce tempest. His very thoughts were tossed, as it were, on the wings of the whirlwind. The bloody conflict, the death of his sons, the rejection of his family, were the voices that loudly rung in his ears, filling his heart with sadness and sorrow. But at last another voice fell on his ears ; he recognized the sound, and he calmly exclaimed, “It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.” “After the fire a still small voice.” Sometimes the means of punishment are very visible ; their language is stern and threatening. But blessings come to us as noiseless as the light, as silent as the morning dew. “After the fire a still small voice.”

Thirdly : *In the renovation of the soul*. “The wind, the earthquake, and the fire,” may be used as preparatory means to the great work of conversion. The thunder of a broken law may send terror to the heart, the lightning flash of justice may scathe the trembling spirit, the fire of Sinai may reveal to the sinner his guilt and peril ; but it requires something more to cause Elijah to wrap his face in his mantle, to produce faith, obedience, and holy love—“After the fire a still small voice.” The influence of the Spirit on the heart is secret, silent, and effective. The singing, the earthquake, the rattling of the prisoners’ chains, filled the Philippian jailor with intense alarm ; his whole being was awfully excited. With the impulse of a maniac he grasped the sword, intending to commit self-destruction ; but the words of Paul,

uttered with Christian kindness, fell like oil on the troubled thoughts of his heart, a new light broke upon his mind, and he cried, "Men and brethren, what shall I do to be saved?" Then, "after the fire came a still small voice:" "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Here was a voice more powerful than the sound of the earthquake—the voice of the Spirit in the soul. We observe again, respecting the power of *silent influence*—

II. IT IS A POWER THAT IS PRODUCTIVE OF THE GREATEST GOOD. It is folly to think that because an influence is silent it cannot be effective. We have already showed that silent forces are the most powerful; and here we shall offer two or three remarks showing that they are also productive of the greatest good. The power of silent influence produces a variety of beneficial effects.

First: *It awakens thought.* The wind, the earthquake, the fire, sometimes disturb the slumbers of a soul in sin. They produce dread, anxiety, and slavish fear; but it is the silent influence that awakens calm and reflective thought. Though the wind broke to pieces the rocks, the earthquake rent the very mountains, and the fire enveloped Sinai in a blaze, the prophet stood on the mount with his face uncovered; but the moment he heard the "still small voice," he fell down and worshipped. Where can we find that influence that touches the heart and makes man think? Not amidst noise and tumult; the scene of disorder and confusion is not favorable to reflection. In order to awake right Christian thoughts, you must retire to your closet, visit the garden, and accompany your Saviour to the lonely hill. While you calmly read your Bible, or devoutly listen to the word of truth, the "still small voice" of the Holy Spirit falls on the ear, and awakens in the mind a train of thought which will end in the salvation of the soul.

Secondly: *It operates on the heart.* The noisy tempest may affect the passions, stir up the animal feelings; but it cannot reach the sinner's heart. There are two inlets by which you



can reach a man's heart—the intellect, and the affections. The former deals chiefly with our words; the latter are affected principally by that silent influence which streams out of our whole life and character. When the eye of Peter in the court met the glance of Jesus, his very soul was stirred up. That mild, reproving glance, conveyed a stream of silent influence that at once reached his heart. “He went out and wept bitterly.” When a sinner's heart is brought under the direct, invisible, silent influence of the Holy Spirit, it will soon be impressed, melted, changed.

Thirdly : *It regulates the actions.* The very power that impresses the heart, will also mould and shape the actions of life. It is often remarked that “example is more powerful than precept.” The reason of this is evident. While the sound of your words falls only upon the ear, the language of the example speaks to the whole man. A stream of silent influence flows out of your example unknown to yourself, impressing the heart, moulding the sentiments, and regulating the actions of your friend. Then the “still small voice” of God in Providence, of Christ in the Gospel, and of the Spirit in the soul, produces the same effects. We notice again, relative to the power of *silent influence*—

III. IT IS A POWER THAT IS LASTING IN ITS EFFECTS. Why is the power of silent influence so durable ?

First : *It is emblematic of the Divine presence.* God was not in the awful tempest which preceded the “still small voice.” Some people imagine that where there is a strong expression of natural feeling, there is an indication of the Divine presence; but generally there is more of the human there than the Divine. The Divine presence in the temple was never displayed amidst noise and tumult. It sat in majestic silence on the mercy-seat, behind the veil.

Secondly : *It becomes a living element in the new character.* The believer in Christ is a new creature; the change he has undergone is not a superficial one, the influence that operated upon his soul has become a vital element of his new spiritual

nature. Do you wonder, that some who once made a noisy profession of Christ have returned like the "washed sow," to sin's filthy mire? It was all "wind;" and "God was not in the wind." He who was influenced by the "still small voice," the silent influence of God's word and Spirit, is still travelling heavenward. This subject shows us the evil of the spirit of self-reliance. It brought Elijah to trouble, and deprived him of some of heaven's best comforts. It also teaches us not to trust too much to external appearances. These may be very sublime and yet destitute of that pure living influence which humbles, awakens, and saves the soul. Have you heard the "still small voice?" Has its silent influence drawn you to the Cross?

J. H. HUGHES.

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## Biblical Criticism.

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THE CODEX SINAITICUS:—*Various Readings.*

WE proceed with the Gospel according to St. Mark:—

### ADDITIONS.

Mark x. 28.—At the end, *τί ἄρα ἔσται ἡμῶν* ;

Mark x. 40.—At the end, *ὑπὸ τοῦ Πατρὸς μου.*

### OMISSIONS.

Mark ix. 23.—*πιστεῦσαι.* This omission brings out more clearly the formal reference of our Lord's words to those which He was answering. The man had said *εἰ τι δύνη*, "if thou *canst* at all, help us, for pity's sake." To this Jesus answers, *τό, εἰ δύνη*, "That can I, if thou *canst*—all things are possible (*πάντα δυνατὰ*) to him that believeth." As if He had said:—It is indeed a question of *power*; but if thou hast *power* to believe, I have *power* to help. All things are in the *power* of him that believeth.

Mark ix. 44.—This verse is wholly wanting.

Mark ix. 45, 46.—From *εἰς τὸ πῦρ*, to the end of verse 46, is wholly wanting.

Mark ix. 48.—*τοῦ πυρός* after *γένναν*. So also Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles.

Mark ix. 49.—*καὶ πᾶσα θυσία ἀλλ' ἁλισθήσεται*. But this omission *may* be a mistake, caused by the repetition of the word *ἁλισθήσεται*.

Mark x. 24.—*τοὺς πεποιθότας ἐπὶ τοῖς χρήμασιν*.

Mark x. 30.—*οἰκίας καὶ ἀδελφούς καὶ ἀδελφὰς καὶ μητέρας καὶ τέκνα καὶ ἀγρούς μετὰ διωγμῶν*. The text is, however, brought by various revisers into nearer correspondence with the received text.

Mark xi. 26.—This verse is wholly wanting.

#### SUBSTITUTIONS.

Mark ix. 41.—*ἐμον ἔσται*, that is, *ἔστε*; instead of *Χριστοῦ ἔστε*.

Mark ix. 42.—*μυλος ονικος* instead of *λίθος μυλικός*.

Mark x. 42.—*βασιλεῖς* instead of *μεγάλοι αὐτῶν*.

Mark x. 50.—*ἀναπηδήσας*, instead of *ἀναστὰς*. This is a much more graphic reading than that in the received text, and is adopted by Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles.

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## The Chair of Theology.

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[This position we have rather been elected to by others, than arrogantly assumed of ourselves. Studious young men, in and out of orders, are adopting the custom of asking us for information and advice respecting a course of theological study, the choice of books, and the like. The thought has occurred, that it would be for their advantage, and our convenience, to throw such remarks as we are able to offer into a systematic form, once for all, that our correspondents may be referred to a standing document.]

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DR. MORELL, in his "History of Modern Philosophy," (vol. I., p. 419) says:—"Many of the Fathers built their theological notions, even too much, upon philosophical dogmas; and the *great mass* of theological authority, both in ancient and modern times, teaches us to base revealed religion upon the broader principles of natural religion. All the great systems of theology that the Church has produced, all at least which have any pretensions to merit, proceed distinctly upon this

principle, and correctly so. How the existence of God could possibly be revealed to us by inspiration or authority, is a problem which has never yet been solved. All revelation proceeds upon the *fact* of His existence, and we know not where this fact could ever find a valid basis, were it disowned as a primary conclusion of our reason and conscience."

From the strain of these remarks we dissent, and representing as they do what we regard as an error, which also is widely spread, injurious to the student, yet specious, and requiring some degree of perspicacity for escape from it, we shall briefly deal with them in this place under the head of Natural Theology.

The value of the Fathers lies in their character, not as philosophers, but as witnesses and interpreters. Whatever philosophical opinions were held, for instance, by Clement of Alexandria, or by Origen, belonged to them as individuals, not as ecclesiastical teachers. Dr. M. is utterly wrong in supposing that the teaching of the Church is based upon any kind of philosophy. The Church bases her teaching wholly on the notion of revelation, and in doing so, is logically right. What "great systems of theology" Dr. M. has in view, we know not. Were the great documents all written in the spirit of the "*Summa*" of Thomas, and similar scholastic writings, the assertion would be just. But it is manifest that they are not, that the metaphysical method characterizes the middle ages. Justin, Cyprian, Athanasius, Basil, and the Gregories, Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Jerome, all wrote either as witnesses or interpreters. Augustin is certainly, to a considerable degree, an exception. But it should be remembered that his zeal against Pelagius urged him beyond the limits of Scripture and the Church, and that he was regarded by the orthodox bishops of his time as an innovator. At the Council of Nice, the question which the assembled bishops asked each other, was not, whether Homoousianism or Homoiousianism, was the most philosophical, but which had been handed down as the standard belief of the Church.

Dr. Morell would probably reckon "Pearson's Exposition

of the Creed " among "the great systems of theology" which have "pretensions to merit." He appears, however, not to have sufficiently considered what the Bishop says (Article I.) respecting the nature of revelation, and God's "patefaction of Himself."—(pp. 7, 21, folio edition.)

God's "patefaction of Himself" is the appropriate basis of Christian theology. Those to whom any person has appeared and spoken, can have no doubt of the existence of that person. And those who believe the testimony of such as have enjoyed this intercourse, will share their assurance.

Bishop Butler occasionally uses expressions, which, at first hearing, sound very like the sentiment of Dr. Morell. For instance, just at the beginning of the Second Part of the "Analogy," he says, "For though natural religion is the foundation and principal part of Christianity, it is not in any sense the whole of it." It is evident, however, on considering the context, and especially the sentence which immediately follows, "Christianity is a re-publication of natural religion," that his meaning is widely different from Dr. Morell's. What Butler holds is evidently this, that the general truths taught by Natural Theology, and re-affirmed by revelation, lie at the basis of those truths which are peculiar to Christianity. This is very far from making Natural Theology, *as actually spelt out from nature*, the basis of the theology of revelation.

Yet although Natural Theology is unnecessary as a basis for Christian Theology, we would not have it discarded; since nature is one and a very glorious instrument of Divine manifestation. And it has this advantage, that it is always at hand. Therefore, the student must include Natural Theology in his plan. And for the reason just mentioned, that its principles, by whatever method ascertained, whether from nature or revelation, logically underlie those which are peculiar to Christianity, it is convenient that the study of it should take the precedence.

The student may begin with Dr. Cudworth's "True Intellectual System of the Universe," a work which is a lasting



monument of the author's profundity as a scholar and a philosopher; and which is, and is likely to remain, the standard treatise on Theism.

There is a great deal of excellent matter in "Tucker's *Light of Nature Pursued*." His style is fresh and lively, and he can hardly be read without considerable mental invigoration. The second volume contains discussions which pass the boundaries of Natural Theology, and what he says of Christian doctrine must often be taken with a grain of salt.

Paley's "Natural Theology" is the book which is usually read on the Argument from Design, and a very similar method is pursued, but more widely and further in Dr. Macculloch's "Proofs and Illustrations of the Attributes of God."

Butler's "Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature," as the title indicates, is not confined to Natural Theology, but leads from that onwards to a philosophic and unanswerable defence of the Christian revelation. To have mastered this work is to have accomplished an intellectual feat, and to have learned the only right method of thinking on the subjects which it deals with. "The Method of the Divine Government, Physical and Moral," by the Rev. James M'Cash, unites soberness with a considerable degree of originality.



## The Christian Year.

BY A CLERGYMAN.

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*The Seventh Sunday after Trinity.*

"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."—Rom. vi. 22.

IN the former part of the chapter, the apostle compares and contrasts two services; the one the service of sin, in which his readers formerly lived; the other the service of righteousness or of God, in which they are living now.

In some respects these services *agree*, in others they *differ*. One most important respect in which they agree is that *each excludes the other*. The apostle takes it for granted that *man must have a master*, he must follow and obey some leading principle. He cannot at one and the same time be the servant of *two* masters, especially of masters so opposite as sin and righteousness, Satan and God. He must be either the servant of sin and free from righteousness, or else, having been made free from sin, become the servant of righteousness. The two services agree in *mutual intolerance*.

They agree also in this, that *each is a voluntary service*. Sin cannot use force to compel us to serve it, nor does God force us to His service. It is our own will and choice, our *yielding*, which renders us servants of either sin or righteousness. No power on earth or in hell can bring us under the bondage of sin without our own consent; and so on the other side, the service of God is *voluntary*, and obedience to Him is *willing*. "Know ye not, that to whom *ye yield yourselves* servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"

These services agree, finally, in that *each is followed by recompense*.

Now let us see in what they *differ*.

They differ, first, in *order*. The service of sin is supposed to come *first*, and the service of God *follows*. The apostle speaks, through the chapter, of the state of sin as something *past*, renounced, and to be forgotten. But the state of righteousness is that which exists now. Therefore, in some passages, he calls the sinful nature *the old man*, and the other *the new man*. "Knowing this, that our *old man* is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (verse 6.) Again: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the *old man*, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the *new man*, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Ephes. iv. 22—24.) These services differ,

therefore, also in *duration*. The one is *temporary*, the other is *lasting*. When we become servants of God, our former state is terminated ; we have done with *sin* as a master ; but our serving God is to last for ever.

They differ, moreover, in *the mode in which we enter them*. Although the entrance is in each case voluntary, yet the doors are widely apart. We become the servants of sin by yielding to temptation, by giving ourselves up to a low impulse ; “He that committeth sin, the same is the servant of sin.” We become the servants of God by yielding ourselves intelligently to a *righteous authority*.

They differ as much in *character*. The service of sin is *hard bondage*. In proportion as we yield to sin, it acquires influence over us and deprives us of power. The force of habit enthrals ever more. We gain a fatal facility in sinning, so as gradually to do it without effort or compunction ; whilst on the other hand the difficulty of obedience is increased, and at last becomes impossibility. The way of death goes downward ; every step we take increases our *momentum*, until the force becomes irresistible by any arrestive power of nature. In spite of the witness and the remonstrances of conscience, we go on sinning. “*That which I do I allow not : for what I would, that do I not ; but what I hate, that do I.*”

On the other hand, the service of Christ is delightful, because, although it involves self-denial, yet it rests on *the new power of the will*, and stands in such action as we approve and love. Conscience now no longer blames but applauds, and we are at peace. *My yoke, saith the Lord, is easy, and my burthen is light.* His law is *the perfect law of liberty*, and *His service is perfect freedom*.

The service of sin is *deceitful*. The vassals are cheated with a fancied freedom, which is really but brutish license. Christ's service is a real, a rational, and noble liberty. He said to the Jews : *If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

The service of sin is a state of *condemnation*. The sinner is condemned by his own conscience, and by the *One Law-giver who is able to save and to destroy*. The sentence is past

upon him, and though the execution is suspended, it is none the less certain—there is no natural means of escape. But the service of Christ is a state of *favor*. The hope of acceptance with God cheers the heart, and His smile sheds sunshine about our path.

These services differ in their *course*. The one course is *monotonous*, the other is *progressive from one excellence to another*. Lawlessness leads on to lawlessness—nothing better, nothing different; but righteousness, which is obedience to the authority of God, leads on to *holiness*, which is complete consecration to the Divine service. “As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to *iniquity unto iniquity* (τῇ ἀνομίᾳ εἰς τὴν ἀνομίαν), even so now yield your members servants to *righteousness unto holiness* (τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ εἰς ἁγιασμόν).” (ver. 19.)

Each of these services has a recompense; but their recompenses differ in *nature*. The one recompense comprehends all the evils, known and unknown, which are involved in that most fearful and woeful of words—*death*, destruction of the man, the laying waste of all his hopes, the withdrawal of all enjoyment, the withering of the spirit. The other recompense consists of all that richness and vastness of good denoted by the glorious word—whose meaning is to us, for the most part, a mystery as yet—*eternal life*, the perfection of all the faculties, and *fulness of joy*.

As these recompenses differ in nature, so also in respect of *desert*. Though equally certain, the one has been *merited*, the other *not*. The sinner has well deserved his doom, and this knowledge itself will be the worst part of his punishment. But no *creature*, not even the holiest, could be rightly said to *deserve* blessing from God. How much less can the sinner! If he receives forgiveness, it is a *gift*; if eternal life crowns his labors, it is a *gift*. As we have seen that the sinner's punishment is enhanced by the knowledge that it is deserved, so the blessedness of the righteous is enhanced by the knowledge that it is *undeserved*, by the sweetness of gratitude to Him to whose favor it is due. *When ye have done all*, said the Lord to the disciples, *say, we are unprofitable servants; we*

*have done that which it was our duty to do.* Hence the apostle here calls the one kind of recompense *wages*, the other *gift*. “The *wages* of sin is death; but the *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The text shows us the *commencement*, the *progress*, and the *end* of the Christian state.

The Christian state commences in a change, a deliverance from fancied freedom but real bondage; an introduction to what is called *service*, but is really freedom. The freedom of the ungodly is like that of the ox which wanders at will through pastures where he is fattening for slaughter. The infidel calls himself a *free* thinker, but in reality he is afraid of contact with God, he fears candid reflection, he is shy of his own conscience; and these fears debar him from soaring into that wide and delightful region of truth to which we are introduced by God’s Word. So the sleeper dreams that he is flying, and, half-awaking, is unwilling to find himself in a confined space and an ignoble position. The service of the Christian is that of one who knows that he is the subject of a beneficent Fatherly government, which seeks only his true interest; with whose objects he sympathizes and co-operates so far as he understands, and where understanding and knowledge fail, faith takes their place; so that when he can trace no longer, he trusts the methods of Divine love and wisdom.

The deliverance from his old bondage he owes to the favor and power of God. He has burst his fetters, but by a strength not his own—the power of God Almighty. He is free from condemnation; but it is because God, in infinite mercy, has granted forgiveness.

The Christian’s *progress* is shown in his *bearing fruit*. “Ye have your *fruit* unto holiness.” We are here to do good works; we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. When these good works are done, and our graces appear, there is something to show as a result, after all that God has done on our behalf. Happy, if after the gifts of Providence and grace, the Saviour’s blood, the privilege of Holy Baptism, the



Gift of the Spirit, and all the means of grace, there is found in us something acceptable to God through Christ !

The man who makes no return but sin may well be confounded. The apostle here contrasts the fruit of holiness with the *disgraceful* results of the service of sin : “ What fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed ? ” ashamed of their folly, deformity, and defilement. Sad for a man to suffer hard bondage and condemnation, the remonstrances of conscience and the degradation of his nature, and after all, to have nothing to show for his toil and sacrifice, nothing valuable or beautiful, naught but what he is ashamed of, which he would not rather hide ! Yet this is the only result of sin.

We see here *the end* of Christian service : *the end everlasting life*. The end accords well with the beginning and the progress. It is consistent that what began with deliverance, and proceeded with bringing forth fruits of holiness, should end with eternal life. The Beginner of the work, and He who carries it on, is also the Finisher. It is God who sets us free, it is God who ordains the fruits of holiness, and eternal life is the gift of God.

The apostle sets the privileges of the Roman Christians before them, not only to fill them with gladness and urge them to thanksgiving, but to call forth effort for purity and consecration according to their calling. We also have been called to God’s service. We have professed faith in the Gospel, have renounced evil, and promised to keep God’s commandments. Let our calling be obeyed, our profession verified and justified. If by God’s grace we have broken the bonds of sin, let us beware lest the fetters be again assumed and rivetted faster than before. Let us *yield our members servants to righteousness unto holiness*. While we *offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving*, let us pray for daily renewal, that our fruits may be acceptable, our works good and fair. “ Every good giving (*δōσεις*) and every perfect gift (*δῶρημα*) is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.” If He into whose name we were baptized has commenced the work of our deliverance, we have the best encouragement for further

effort, as He never deserts the soul that strives in earnest for progress in righteousness and holiness. Let that effort be made—the vows of God are upon us. Then if by God's blessing we bear the fruits of holiness, the tree of hope shall blossom evermore, a fair foretelling of God's crowning gift of eternal life, *the end* of His grace and of our service.

## The Preacher's Finger-Post.

### TEMPTERS.

"While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."—2 Peter ii. 19.

IN all ages there have abounded, in every part of the world and grade of society, those who are pre-eminently the Tempters of their fellow-men. They are the emissaries of the great Tempter Satan; they are inspired with his spirit, and they are diligent in his work. The subjection of souls to their own errors and lusts, is their grand work. They are the devourers of virtue. The text reveals such to our attention—it points us to the instrumentality they employ, the character they sustain, and the conquest they achieve.

I. THE INSTRUMENTALITY THEY EMPLOY. What is the instrumentality the Tempter

employs in order to rifle of their virtue those whom he attacks? First: *It is a promise.* "They promise." Promises are cheap things: hence they abound, they stream in a constant flow from the lips of the false. They cost nothing; the poorest can make them, yet they are mighty enchantments. The devil came to man first in a promise. "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." And to the Son of God in the wilderness, the arch-seducer promises "the kingdoms of the earth." Promise is Satan's golden hook that he lets down into the river of human life, which souls catch at, and become his. The ungodly world is led by fair promises. Long life, pleasure, wealth, fame, are held out to the eye of hope to attract the soul from the orbit of innocence and truth. Secondly: It is a promise of "*liberty.*" They promise them liberty.

Liberty is a word that charms the heart; it has something in it that vibrates in all the chords of the soul—something towards which all the tides of our nature heave and struggle. The Tempter promises liberty—liberty to act, without the shackles of responsibility; to live as you list; to riot uncontrolled in worldly pleasures.

II. THE CHARACTERS THEY SUSTAIN. "They themselves are the servants of corruption." They are the miserable vassals of lust and depravity. The devil is a great slave. He is in chains of darkness; he is a wretched victim of his own ambitious impulses, and self-confounding efforts. So are all Tempters "servants of corruption." First: *Their character is the most degraded.* They are servants—servants of what? Servants of the basest, the most contemptible thing in the universe; the abhorrence of angels and of God—*corruption*. Convicts, doomed to the most degrading work that the avenging justice of men can invent, are respectable in their calling, compared with the debased service of a deathless soul engaged in fulfilling the dictates of corruption. An immortal intelligence, employing all its wonderful

powers in serving avarice, lusts, appetites, and all the foul demons of depravity, is a sight at which angels may well stand aghast with mingled horror and contempt. Secondly: *Their promise is most preposterous.* The idea of the slaves of corruption promising *liberty*! Promises, perhaps, as a rule, amongst men, abound most, where there is the least ability to fulfil. Strong words are employed to hide weakness, and rich overtures of good to others to conceal the wretched indigence of him who speaks. Well does Peter speak in the preceding verse of those Tempters as speaking "great swelling words of vanity." The devil is all promise. Beware of Tempters; they are bland in word and fair in aspect; but trust them not. They hold out liberty to you, but they themselves are the servants of corruption. Sooner trust the poorest pauper to give you a kingdom, than trust your tempter to give you liberty.

III. THE CONQUEST THEY ACHIEVE. "For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." "Of whom," that is, that by which anyone is overcome—gets the mastery of him. If he is overcome by avarice, avarice is his tyrant; if by

sensuality, sensuality is his tyrant. First: *This conquest shows the falsehood of the tempter in his promise.* They promise liberty, and here is the result—*bondage* of the most painful and ignominious kind. The liberty that sin promises is slavery. Freedom from the obligations of duty, the restraints of conscience, and the rule of religion, is the spirit of a slavery that is Satanic in its character. The greater the sinner the greater the slave. Secondly: *This conquest shows the ultimate wretchedness of the victim.* He is brought in “bondage.” What is the bondage? (1) *Their slavery is the most real.* Chains and prison walls can only enslave the body. No granite can imprison, no chains can manacle the soul. But he who is the slave of corruption, is bound in spirit. He is held in captivity. (2) *Their slavery is the most criminal.* Corporal slavery is generally a misfortune; the sufferer is not responsible for his position. Not so with those who are servants of corruption. They have made their own tyrants, they have forged their own fetters, they are self-bound. (3) *Their slavery is the most lasting.* Death destroys corporal slavery. In the grave the serf is free from his tyrant. Not so with this bondage.

#### THE REDEMPITIVE FORCE AND THE REDEMPITIVE WORK.

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”—Rom. viii. 2.

MAN'S great need is moral redemption; redemption of his intellect from error, his affections from impurity, his heart from selfishness, his conscience from guilt, his whole spirit from the slavery of sin. This redemption is the subject of the text. It leads us to consider—

#### I. THE REDEMPITIVE FORCE.

What is the power to effect the moral redemption of man? It is here represented as a *law*—a law of the *Spirit*—a law of the spirit of *life*. First: It is a “*law*.” The Gospel is called a law. Isaiah represents the isles as waiting for this *law*. James speaks of it as the *perfect law of liberty*. A law is always associated with *authority*, *publicity*, and *sanction*. The Gospel issues from the highest authority, is revealed to humanity, and is enforced by sanction of life and death. Secondly: It is a law of the “*Spirit*.” The Spirit of God is its author, revealer, and applier. Thirdly: It is the law of the spirit of *life*. The Gospel gives *life*—judicial, mental, and spiritual life. Fourthly: It is the law of

the spirit of life "*in Christ Jesus.*" The Spirit comes through Christ and is dispensed by Christ. The whole redemptive power is by Christ Jesus.

The text leads us to consider—

## II. THE REDEMPTIVE WORK.

In what does it consist? The soul is made free from the law of sin and death. First: *The spirit is freed from the condemnation of that moral law which discovers sin and dooms to death.* By the moral law is the *knowledge* of sin, and that law dooms every sinner to death. "Cursed is every one," &c. The moral law can do nothing for the sinner. Secondly: *The soul is made free from that evil principle within which acts as the law of sin and death.* Sin has become the law of our nature. It is an all-controlling force, subordinating everything to itself. Now the redemptive work involves the freeing of the soul from the *condemnation of the moral law of God, and the domination of the depraved law of humanity.* This is the work, and concerning it we may make three remarks. First: *This work is essential to the well-being of every soul.* God's law dooms the sinner to death, and the principle of

depravity within works death. "The wages of sin is death." Secondly: *This work is a matter of consciousness when it is effected.* The apostle speaks of it as a matter of conscious certainty. "*Hath made me free.*" He who has been delivered must know it. Thirdly: *This work has to do with man in his individual character.* "Hath delivered me." The Gospel is not like some political measure which may free a nation in the aggregate. It frees the race by freeing the *individual*; it works from the centre to the circumference. The Gospel has to do with the individual man.

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## THE GLORY OF THE GOOD.

"If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."—Rom. viii. 17.

WHATEVER may be the estimate which worldly men entertain concerning the disciples of Christ, and whatever humble view these may entertain of themselves, one thing is clear—that the Bible represents them as sustaining a position of pre-eminent dignity and privilege. From the text we learn—

I. That they are in a *distinguishing* sense the "CHILDREN OF GOD." "If children," &c. There is a



sense in which all men are the children of God. "He is the Father of all spirits." (1) They are His *offspring*. They are begotten by His almighty energy. (2) They *resemble* Him in their spiritual constitution;—they have reason, conscience, spontaneity, immortality. But genuine Christians are His children in a higher sense. First: They have a *special resemblance* to Him. They are "partakers" of His *moral* nature. Love, which rules Him, is their inspiration and life. They wear His moral image. Secondly: They have a *special affection* for Him. The true *filial* spirit which mankind lost through sin, fills and fires their nature. They have "the spirit of adoption." Thirdly: They have a *special attention* from Him. His heart is on them. He educates them as a Father, and provides for them as a Father. To be His children in this sense, what an inestimable privilege! what a glory and distinction! From the text we learn that—

II. They are in a *distinguishing* sense the INHERITORS OF ALL GOOD. "If children, then heirs," &c. First: They are *heirs of God*. Civil society and natural instincts authorize children to expect the property of their parents. Children step into

the inheritance of their parents. Christians are heirs of God. What an inheritance is theirs!—all things are theirs—"Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death." Their inheritance is sometimes called "an inheritance amongst them which are sanctified;" sometimes "the inheritance of the saints in light;" sometimes "an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Their inheritance, in truth, is nothing less than God Himself, all that He is, and all that He has. "The Lord is their portion." Secondly: They are "*joint-heirs with Christ*." Heirs to the same honors and blessings as Christ. "The glory which thou hast given me, I have given them." They shall "enter into the joy of their Lord." "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne."

Such are the intimations which the text furnishes concerning the glory of the good. The grand question is—Are we His children in the apostolic sense?—"If children, then heirs," &c. If heirs, let our spirit and deportment be in keeping with our *grand position and lofty prospects*.

A GREAT GAIN, A GREAT LOSS,  
AND A GREAT CURSE.

"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."—2 Peter ii. 20.

THE text leads us to consider—

I. A GREAT GAIN. What is the gain? An escape from "the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." First: *The world is a scene of moral corruption.* By *the world*, is meant—not of course the physical creation—but human society. It requires no Bible to assure us that mankind is depraved. Let the worldling and the sceptic who believe in Shakespear as the prince of teachers, mark well the language of the great dramatist on the question of the world's depravity:—

"All is oblique—  
There's nothing level in our cursed  
natures  
But direct villainy."

The moral spirit that animates and rules the world, is hostile to truth, justice, purity, God. Secondly: *To escape these corruptions is of the greatest importance to man.* If he live and die in them, he is ruined for ever. The

world is the Sodom from which he must escape, otherwise he will be consumed by the gathering storm of fire. Thirdly: *This escape is effected through "the knowledge of Christ."* Other sciences have failed, signally and miserably failed, to purify the world. But the knowledge of Christ is designed for this very purpose, is admirably fitted to accomplish it, and never fails when tried. The most glorious sight in the world is the sight of a man escaping from its pollutions by this knowledge of Christ. The text leads us to consider—

II. A GREAT LOSS. Peter supposes the position of escapement after being gained, *lost*. They are "entangled and overcome." First: *Good men, being moral agents, can fall.* An impossibility of falling is incompatible with the constitution of a free and responsible agent. Secondly: *Good men, in this world, are surrounded by influences tempting them to apostasy.* There is so much to entangle, so much to overcome on all hands. Thirdly: *Good men in this world have fallen from the positions they have occupied.* David, Peter, &c., are examples. Fourthly: *Good men are warned in the Bible against the danger of falling.* "Let

him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," &c. The text leads us to consider—

III. A GREAT CURSE. "The latter end is worse with them than the beginning." On the assumption that he continues entangled and overcome, better had he never escaped, better had he continued down in the world's pollutions. "His latter end" is worse—First: *Because he is the subject of greater guilt.* He has sinned against higher knowledge and influences than he ever did before. His latter end is worse—Secondly: *Because he has the elements of greater distress.* He has greater sources of regret and greater contrasts in his experience. His latter end is worse—Thirdly: *Because he is in a*

*condition of greater hopelessness.* They are less susceptible to converting influence than they were when the Gospel first influenced them. He who leaves a brilliantly lighted room to go out on a journey in the night, feels the darkness more dense and confounding, than he who has been out from the commencement of night-fall. The patient, too, who meets with a complete relapse after having been raised to convalescence sinks into a state more hopeless far, than he was when the physician was first called to his aid. *The latter end is worse than the beginning.* Heaven knows that the state before the gracious change took place was bad enough, too bad fully to estimate; how bad, then, must the latter end be!

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## The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

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### RECORDING POWER OF CONSCIENCE.

Men conceive they can manage their sins with secrecy; but they carry about them a letter, or book rather, written by God's finger, their conscience bearing witness to all their actions. But sinners being often detected and accused, hereby grow wary at last, and to prevent this speaking paper from telling any tales, do smother, stifle, and suppress it when they

go about the committing of any wickedness. Yet conscience, though buried for a time in silence, hath a resurrection and discovers all to their greater shame and heavier punishment.

THOMAS FULLER.

### A WOUNDED CONSCIENCE.

To fear a wounded conscience is in part to feel it antedating one's misery, and tormenting

himself before the time, seeking for that he would loathe to find, like the wicked in the Gospel, of whom it is said, "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and looking for those things which are coming."—IBID.

#### CONSCIENCE AND THE BIBLE.

Conscience and the Bible have a common meeting point behind, as it were, or above, in law: and a common meeting-place in front, in virtue. As they point upwards or backwards, their lines meet in Divine law; as they tend forwards or downwards, their lines meet in human virtue. This thought might be presented in a sort of diagram. Look at an elongated diamond-shaped figure. At the extremities of a line drawn across between the two larger angles, let conscience and the Bible stand inscribed; conscience on the left, and the Bible on the right. The other two extremities, those of a

line joining the smaller angles, may indicate the relative positions, the one of law, the other of virtue. Beginning at a point marked for law, draw two diverging lines till they reach two other points, opposite to one another, marked for conscience and the Bible respectively; thereafter let the lines converge till they come together in a fourth point, that may be marked as denoting virtue. Such is a sort of geometrical representation of the positions occupied by law, the Bible, conscience, virtue, relatively to one another. Law is prior to both conscience and the Bible; it is recognised as prior by both of them; both of them look up to it and do it homage. Virtue again is under them; it appeals to them; they judge it. Conscience and the Bible acknowledge law; they approve virtue; and across the line joining law and virtue, conscience and the Bible meet.

CANDLISH.

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## Theological Notes and Queries.

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#### OPEN COUNCIL.

[The utmost freedom of honest thought is permitted in this department. The reader must therefore use his own discriminating faculties, and the Editor must be allowed to claim freedom from responsibility.]

#### *Queries to be answered.*

1.—Are Satan and sin inseparable?—that is, are they in the relation of cause and effect? Or, would sin cease to exist amongst men if Satan were bound?

QUÆRE VERUM.

2.—We have evidences of preaching during the Mosaic dispensation, although not, perhaps, during the patriarchal. What was the subject-matter, or object of

preaching, before the present dispensation?—H.

3.—We hear much of missionary effort; but what, however, is the most effective agency for reaching that large and growing class of people around us, who, whilst they are highly gifted in circumstances and in intellect, never attend our places of worship, co-operate not with Christian workers, and call not Christ, Master?

IN SOLO DEO SALUS.

# Literary Notices.

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[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books ; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

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## THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,  
Since none can compass more than they intend.

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THE SYNTAX AND SYNONYMS OF THE GREEK TESTAMENT. By WILLIAM WEBSTER, M.A., late Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge, recently of King's College, London. London : Rivingtons.

It was said by an old English philosopher, that words are the counters of wise men and the money of fools. The saying has been reversed by a great living theologian, who thinks that they are the counters of fools and the money of wise men. Were it necessary to choose between them, we should incline to the modern reversion of the saying. Yet the opposition is more in sound than in sense. All that Thomas Hobbes intended, was a caution against the careless inattention to the meaning of words which often beguiles men into error; and what Archbishop Trench intends, is to point out the value of words as vehicles of thought. Like bees, these winged words are laden with riches, the spoil of earth's choicest gardens and of paradise itself.

Words, as the means of revelation, are of the highest importance to the true theologian; and we lightly esteem the theology of any man who has not given them his most careful attention. Theology is not a growth of the human mind, but the tracing of a Divine river from its rise in Eden to its present majestic dimensions. As well might a geologist be ignorant of the characteristics of the various strata, as a theologian of words. It is most sad to remember how men have theorized on Christian doctrine with a neglect of the authoritative documents themselves; how they have built their pyramids in an inverted position—base in the high air and apex resting on some misunderstood text, perhaps on an auxiliary verb of the English Bible. It was only the other day we heard that the head of a whole school of divines in America, who is regarded as an oracle by many in England, was unable to read his Greek Testament.



Believing, as we do, that theology cannot exist where the original Scriptures are not studied, and that the very diction of Scripture is one of the most forcible proofs of its Divine origin, we hail every successful worker in this field as rendering high service to the Church of his generation.

The author of the volume before us is not unknown to our readers. We have often directed attention to the very admirable Greek Testament on whose title-page his name stands as the first joint editor. The "Homilist" itself has been enriched by a series of suggestive articles in the department of Sacred Philology proceeding from his accomplished pen.

Our satisfaction with the present work is very great. The author has earned the gratitude of all real theological students. Were there in our language works in every department of sacred literature written with the same degree of ability and learning, the need of sending across the German Ocean for helps in Biblical lore would cease. For value of information, for method and condensation, we far prefer this volume to Winer, or any other similar vaunted German authority. We venture to predict that it will soon become an acknowledged standard work, and be regarded as indispensable among the furniture of the Biblical student.

In the preliminary chapter on the Peculiarities of Hellenistic Greek, Mr. Webster considers that the language spoken by Jesus was not Greek but Syriac, and that Greek was acquired by most of the writers of the New Testament at mature age. With this opinion, though not to the full disciples of Diodati, we are not prepared wholly to coincide. We think that the Gospels afford at least apparent proofs of the common use of both languages in Palestine at the time of our Lord. Mr. Webster considers—and he is probably right—that the Hebraistic element in the New Testament has, from deficient scholarship, been greatly over-rated by some. The language of the New Testament is that great Common Dialect, which had been carried, and modified as it was carried, to countries east and west of Greece Proper, included within a vast circumference. There is in this Dialect, as found in the New Testament, a Hebrew element and an Alexandrine. There is also a Christian element, arising from the necessities of a new revelation, for new words, and new senses for old ones. It should also be remembered that the style is colloquial, rather than literary; the diction often rather that of conversation than of composition. Long speeches are recorded in the Acts, and many of the Epistles were written from dictation, a fact which may account for the numerous unfinished sentences and abrupt transitions of St. Paul.

After this general chapter, we have eight which are purely grammatical. That on the Formation of Words is peculiarly valuable. Indeed from all of them the student may obtain an inestimable instrument in New Testament Hermeneutics, and the textual illustrations of the principles expounded are often surprising and delightful, in the vividness

with which one is helped to perceive the exact force of the expressions which are used. Sometimes a text which has vexed the commentators for ages, and about which you may in vain consult the Fathers, has an unexpected light thrown upon it. Take, for instance, that of John xx. 17, *μὴ μου ἄπτου, κ. τ. λ.* "Do not fasten on me . . . do not continue to cling to me, for I have not yet ascended; but proceed to my brethren, and tell them that I am about to ascend." (pp. 75, 93.)

But while the electric light of sound philology is thus flashed on many passages, there are cases in which our author's remarks do not always produce conviction. One of these is the celebrated passage, Phil. ii. 6. We do not refer to the admirable remark on *ὑπαρχων* (p. 199), nor to the exposition of *μορφή* (p. 222), which is preferable to the Patristic explanation of Suicer; but to the account given of *ἄρπαγμόν* on p. 248. According to Mr. Webster's own rule, "Nouns in *μοσ* express the action of the verb proceeding from the subject; the action and its result." There is nothing in the context to prevent our taking *ἄρπαγμος* as the action of the verb, and we are quite content with the word "robbery" which is used in the authorized version. There is not a hint in the authorized version, or in the Greek, about *claiming*, as some seem to suppose. The literal translation is:—"did not consider equality with God [to be] robbery." In the context, the apostle is exhorting his readers against *ἐριθεία* and *κενοδοξία*, which are kindred with *ἄρπαγμός*, and in favor of *ταπεινοφροσύνη*, which is opposed to it. This exhortation he enforces by the example of Christ Jesus, the grand instance of *ταπεινοφροσύνη*, the grand contradiction of *ἄρπαγμός*. Now, as robbery is snatching something which is not yours, the opposite of it is resigning something which you rightfully possess. Christ Jesus did not consider equality with God to have any connexion with the former, but with the latter. That which originally belonged to Him was the *μορφή Θεοῦ*. This He resigned; but He could not resign what He did not possess, and no creature could ever have worn the "form of God." His equality with God was shown by this greatest of all acts of *ταπεινοφροσύνη*. That this is the meaning, appears further from the *ἀλλὰ*, which indicates transition to the opposite, and finally from the return to the exhortation after this sublime doctrinal digression. As if he had said—Strife and robbery are not Divine; but renunciation of what you rightfully possess, is the true path of honor. Nothing is ever really gained by robbery, but renunciation is rewarded by God.

After this over-long digression, we can only add a few words. The tenth chapter contains fifty pages, and is wholly occupied with the important matter of Synonyms. Here the author has incorporated most that was available in Trench's first series, and has given very much of his own, which is as valuable as anything in Trench. This chapter will not be the least valued by the student, but at least equally

prized with all the rest of the volume. The chapter entitled "Hints on the Authorized Version" abounds with learning and illustration, but we should sometimes differ with the author on questions of taste, on the principle, that alterations should as far as possible preserve the spirit of our incomparable English Bible diction. The last chapter is occupied chiefly with such rhetorical figures as are instanced in the writings of the New Testament. The work is amply furnished with indices. We heartily commend it, and strongly urge all such as desire to be "scribes well instructed," to make it their constant companion, when morning dawns, and when "the quincunx of heaven runs low," until its contents are transferred from the paper to the memory.

THE LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. Translated from the German of J. P. LANGE, D.D. By REV. MARCUS DODS, A.M. In Six Volumes. Vols. IV., V., VI. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clarke. London Hamilton & Co.

THE first three volumes of this masterly work, we noticed and commended in our May Number of the "Homilist." The three now before us, sustain the judgment we then pronounced. It may be well, in order to give our readers the plan of the work, to allow the author to speak for himself:—"The plan which is to guide the work begun in this volume, bears reference to the foundation, the practical characteristics, and the development of the evangelical history; and hence to its root, its stem, its branches. With respect to the foundation of the Gospel history, the attempt has been made in the present book to furnish a clear representation of two of its essential relations—its relation on the one hand to the ideal and its multiform phenomena, and on the other to criticism. In the second book follows a continuous and synoptic exhibition of the Life of Jesus. In this, I hope to give distinct prominence to the chief particulars of the articulation by which the four Gospels are united into one actual history. In the third and last book, I propose to sketch the Life of Jesus in its broader features, according to that development of its infinite richness which is presented by the peculiar views of each separate Gospel. In this work, the assumption (which is still too widely prevalent) that the essential Gospel history is injured, and has become a spoilt joint-history, will be emphatically opposed. The prejudice that the four accounts are the source of a want of unity, will be met by the proof that they rather exhibit the richness of this unity. If the Lord give me health and strength, the execution of this work shall not be destroyed." We trust that a scheme of thought reaching so far and deep into all that is vital in our faith, will secure what it deserves—the profoundest study of every minister of Christ.

THE COLLECTED WRITINGS OF EDWARD IRVING. In Five Volumes. Edited by his Nephew, REV. G. CARLYLE, M.A. Vol. II. London: Alexander Strahan & Co.

HERE is another splendid volume of the writings of the renowned Edward Irving. As a writer, Irving reminds us more of Milton than any other English author with whom we are acquainted. His thoughts are as far-reaching, his imagery oftentimes as majestic, his language as affluent, his style as stately, but less involved and more pointed, his spirit as sublimely reverential and incorruptibly honest. There is no preacher like him in these days. His very eccentricities and extravagances had a divinity about them: they stand in crushing contrast with the studied singularities of some of the smaller pulpiteers of this age, whose whole life seems a wooing for popularity. He had the eye of the seer, the heart of the reformer, the tongue of the orator, the fire that burns only in the true prophet of the Lord. We thank Mr. Carlyle, the able editor, for his efforts in adding to the best literature of the world.

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MEMOIRS OF JOSEPH STURGE. By HENRY RICHARDS. London: S. W. Partridge; and A. W. Bennett.

THIS is a refreshing book. It revives a waning faith in one's species, and arrests the progress of cynicism. Who that has an eye to peer into the spirit of society and a heart honestly to labor for the common good, has not often felt his inspiration for benevolent labor droop in the presence of the hollow professors of religion, the miserable time-servers, the mercenary grubs, and the base flunkies, that abound in almost every circle he enters? The life of such a man as Joseph Sturge comes to the help of such; it is like a breath of life from the eternal world, a ray that shoots across our path, bidding us step on in the hope of brighter hours. Merchants should study his life. He was a "Successful Merchant" of a far higher type, we think, than the hero of a book bearing this title. A successful merchant is not one who merely accumulates great wealth. Villainy can beat virtue in building up fortunes; nor is he one who merely gives large portions of his immense profits to religious and charitable institutions. This may be often done to placate conscience or to further the ends of business as an advertisement. A successful fortune-maker may be a moral bankrupt. Money-making, with a true successful merchant, as in the case of Joseph Sturge, is a means of grace. The process was religious, soul-developing, and ennobling. Philanthropists should study his life. His philanthropy was no narrow sympathy; it overleaped all distinctions of race, country, sect, and embraced mankind; it was the spirit of his religion and the queen of his patriotism. His philanthropy was not mere sentiment, expending itself in platform talk and occasional subscriptions. It was a life with him. His philanthropy

was not a blind impulse. There are those who assume the name of philanthropists, who do immense harm to the sacred cause for the want of capacity to see the Divine path in which benevolence should flow. Some are such fools that they employ one evil to destroy another. War, for instance, the concentration of all enormities, is sanctioned in order to terminate the abominations of slavery. Weak-minded philanthropists are social pests. We heartily commend this book to young men especially. The talented biographer has done his work with appreciative sympathy, honest discrimination, healthy philanthropic aspirations, profound acquaintance with the spirit and wants of his age, and characteristic ability.

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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF RICHARD SIBBES, D.D. By the REV. ALEXANDER B. GROSART. Vol. VII. Edinburgh: James Nichol. London: James Nisbet & Co.

THIS volume concludes the whole of the single sermons not already given, and all of the remaining writings of Dr. Sibbes. We have already pronounced our opinion upon this author. The learned editor's characterization strikes us as very faithful. "For Sibbes, then, is not claimed the title of 'great,' so much abused, and indeed vulgarized, in the world's meaning. Weighed against contemporaries—Shakespeare, Bacon, Milton—he has no awful crown of genius. Placed beside other divines, Church and Puritan, he lacks the orient splendor of Jeremy Taylor, the massiveness of Barrow, the intensity of Baxter, the unexpected wit of Thomas Goodwin; nor has he left behind him any great work such as that on 'The Creed' by Pearson, or the 'Defensio' by Bull. In reading him we never come upon recondite speculation, wide-reaching generalization, sustained argument, burning eloquence, flashes of wit, aphoristic wisdom, not even, or but rarely, melody of words. But 'a soul of goodness' informs every fibre and filament of his thinking; nor is there a page without food for the spiritually hungry. He has few equals, and certainly no superior, for ingenuity in bringing comfort to tried, weary, ones, and in happy use of Scripture, his mere citation of a text being like a shaft of light. It should be noticed that the very invariableness of Sibbes's excellence hides his richness and power, as the very commonness of the air makes us forget the wonder and the blessedness of it."

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THOUGHTS ON THE ETERNAL. By Rev. COSMO R. GORDON, M.A., F.R.G.S., F.S.A. Scot. Published by Request. London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green.

HERE is a volume of twenty-one discourses, all upon subjects of spiritual interest and eternal moment. We are happy to find that they were delivered to large congregations, for they are worth listening to, and we



are glad to receive them in the printed form of a volume, for they are also worth reading. The man who preaches such sermons as these in the "ordinary course" of his ministry, and amidst the "heavy duties of a large parish and other public engagements," is indeed fulfilling a high mission. They are no common-place productions. Though the sentiments are strictly orthodox, they are often set forth in new and striking aspects. Every page indicates the presence of a Christian philosopher, and a minister in earnest with souls.

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SHAKESPEARE'S KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF THE BIBLE. By CHARLES WORDSWORTH, D.C.L. London: Smith, Elder, & Co.

SHAKESPEARE'S position in the mind of the world is a rising one. Once he was only recognized by the profane class; even the more moral of the secular world shrunk from him as one not fit to be their companion, but now he is admitted into the religious sphere. In this book we have a Christian bishop expressing a hope to his own children that they may grow up "readers and lovers of Shakespeare"—And why not; if it be true what the bishop maintains, that Shakespeare was a "diligent and devout reader of the "Word of God," and that his own works are "saturated with Divine wisdom?" This looks as if one day the plays of this immortal writer would be acted in our churches and cathedrals. How far such a result is to be desired or deprecated is not our question now. The bishop, in this able and learned work, has rendered an important service to the students and admirers of England's renowned bard. He throws much light on many of the doubtful passages of our great dramatist, and shows beyond doubt that he studied the book of inspiration as well as the book of nature.

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THACKERAY, THE HUMORIST AND THE MAN OF LETTERS. The Story of his Life, including a selection from his Characteristic Speeches, now for the first time gathered together. By THEODORE TAYLOR, Esq. With Photograph from Life by ERNEST EDWARDS, B.A., and Original Illustrations. London (Piccadilly): John Camden Hotten.

THIS seasonable volume does not, of course, profess to be the complete biography of such of a man as Thackeray. Yet what it professes to do it does exceedingly well. It satisfies the first desire, which is always felt on the disappearance of a public man, for more lengthened information than can be found in newspaper or magazine. That is to say, it gives an outline of his life, enabling us to trace the development of his peculiar genius from its first unripe attempts to the products of its maturity. The sixteen pages of his speeches constitute one of the most attractive features of the book, which is one that once taken up, will hardly be laid down until finished.

**SYMPATHY.** By REV. DAVID A. DOUDNEY. London: William Macintosh.

He who would look to this book for original thoughts on the truths and ways of God, or for the development of the highest type of manly Christianity, would perhaps be disappointed. Albeit, those who with a simple mind seek for spiritual wisdom and consolation, will leave the perusal of this work improved in mind and heart.

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**THE WIDOW'S OFFERING.** A Sermon by REV. COMPTON BURNETT. London: Judd & Glass.

THIS discourse is founded on the text referring to the widow's mite, and contains the development of the three following lessons, which the author deduces from it:—That according to the Divine plan, the house of God contains a treasury for the reception of secular contributions.—That the secular treasury of God's house is under the continual inspection of heaven.—That the secular treasury of God's house claims a liberal contribution from every worshipper, to withhold which is sin. These thoughts the preacher works out with great brevity, but with considerable force.

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**A PLEA FOR HOLY SCRIPTURE.** By THOMAS GRIFFITH, A.M. London and Cambridge: Macmillan & Co.

THIS is a masterly pamphlet. Though small in compass, it contains a powerful exposition of principles admirably adapted to put down Bibliolatry on the one hand, and Biblioclasm on the other.

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**THE WISDOM OF OUR FATHERS.** Selections from the Writings of LORD BACON. London: Religious Tract Society.

THIS book is made up of selections from the theological, ethical, philosophical, forensic and miscellaneous works of Lord Bacon. Commendation of such a work would be superfluous.

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**THE LAMBS ALL SAFE.** By REV. ALEXANDER B. GROSART. Edinburgh: W. Oliphant & Co. This is a beautiful little work, suited to comfort bereaved parents, from the pen of one of the ablest writers of the day.

**THE ENGLISH BIBLE AND ITS TRANSLATORS.** A Lecture. By REV. JOHN JULIAN. London: William Freeman. A Lecture, full of useful information, interestingly and strikingly given.

**THE LIVING GOD AND SAVIOUR OF ALL MEN.** By R. W. DALE, M.A. London: Jackson, Walford, & Hodder. An able Sermon delivered on a great occasion.




# A HOMILY

ON

## Apostolic Patriotism.

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"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above :) Or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."—Rom. x. 1—11.

T. PAUL was not more distinguished as a saint and an apostle, than as a patriot. He was a model one. His patriotism had a philosophy which discovered the cause of his country's evils, and a policy exquisitely fitted to remove them. Without ignoring its temporal interests, or disparaging in any way the importance of its material revenues and political power, his main endeavor was to raise its benighted intellect to light, and turn the mighty current of its moral sympathies into the channel of truth and holiness. It was not

an occasional sentiment with him, it was an abiding and regal force. It did not pass off in chanting national airs or delivering florid speeches; it was with him a "heart's desire and prayer to God." He loved his country, not merely because of the loveliness of its physical scenery or the architectural beauty of its buildings, nor because it was the home of the greatest poets, philosophers, and heroes that the world had ever known; but because of its special connection with that God whose he was, and whom he felt bound to serve—"Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever." His patriotism was consistent with true philanthropy; nay, it was a development of it. The passion that inspires men to rifle and ruin other countries in order to aggrandize their own, and which popular ignorance applauds under the name of patriotism, has no affinity whatever with that noble passion which glowed in the heart of our apostle. It is more akin to hell than heaven. The statesman, warrior, king, who injure other nations in order to benefit their own, are no patriots. They violate the eternal rights of man, and therefore, by the settled arrangements of righteous Heaven, bring a ruinous retribution upon the country they foolishly aim to serve. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." They that lead into captivity, must go thither. This is an irrevocable decree in the moral government of the world. All history shows that its operations are as regular as the "ordinances of heaven."

In looking at the text as a revelation of *apostolic patriotism*, we discover three things that are essential to a generous and virtuous love of country.

I. THE APOSTLE'S PATRIOTISM SOUGHT THE HIGHEST GOOD OF HIS COUNTRY. What was that? Augmented wealth, extended dominion, a higher state of intellectual culture? No,

*Salvation.* "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." Salvation is the master-theme of the Bible, the great want of the race, and the ultimate design of all God's dispensations with our world. What a universe of blessing the word involves. It implies deliverance from all evil,—from whatever deludes the reason, enslaves the will, enfeebles the faculties, pollutes the conscience, or pains the heart,—from the despotism of evil, the temptations of Satan, the miseries of hell. It implies far more than this. This is but negation. It implies a right state of soul—a soul whose wondrous and various powers are quickened into virtuous action and controlled by righteous principles—a soul, holding a supreme power over its own impulses, and a thorough mastery over all externalities. It implies a state in which every thought shall be true, every emotion felicitous, every act holy, and every scene gleaming with the smiles of an approving God. It implies, in brief, the enjoyment of all that is contained in the word "Heaven"—the throne of God and the Lamb, the ministries of angels, fellowship with the great and the good of all worlds and ages.

Three things are implied in this "heart's desire" of the apostle's patriotism.

First: *A conviction that his countrymen needed salvation.* Their physical blessings were great; his brethren "according to the flesh" lived in a beautiful country. Whatever could delight the senses, or wake true poetry in the soul, was in that goodly land. There rose the mountains sublimely solemn, with the chastened look of centuries;—majestic cedars waved from the heights of Lebanon; Hermon lay glistening and green in living dew; Gilead distributed its healing balm. The Jordan rolled through its centre, receiving into its bosom the springs which had "run among the hills," and wound through the valleys, giving "drink to every beast of the field" and touching all into life. Meadows clad in living green slept at the foot of the hills. The rose looked beautiful in Sharon, and the lily in the valley. The grapes were abundant in Eschol. The barns were filled with plenty, and presses burst



forth with new wine. The softest winds breathed through all, causing the sweetest spices to flow and perfume the air. "The little hills rejoiced" on every side, and the "trees clapped their hands together." Precious fruits were brought forth by the sun, and precious things were put forth by the moon. "It was a land flowing with milk and honey." But his country had more than these temporal blessings, it had the oracles of God, the temple of Jehovah, the Divine order of priesthood, and a religious ritual delineated by God Himself. Yet in spite of all these temporal and religious advantages, the apostle regarded his brethren as *lost*. He looked into the moral heart of his country, and he found that the soul was dead and dark under the dominion of sin and the condemnation of heaven; hence he sought their salvation. — Whatever else a country has, if it has not true religion it is lost. This is its great want. Give it this, and every other good will come. All necessary things go with the kingdom of God. Do you deplore the evils of your fatherland, and do you sigh for their removal? The only effective method by which to realize your patriotic wishes, is to promote true godliness. All political and social evils grow out of moral causes, and godliness alone can remove these. It is profitable therefore unto all things; it has the promise of the "life that now is, and of that which is to come."

Another thing implied in this heart's desire of the apostle's patriotism is—

Secondly: *A conviction that the salvation of his countrymen requires the interposition of God.* Why else did he pray? "My heart's desire and prayer, to God." The apostle believed in the adaptation of the Gospel which he preached, to convert souls and to effect the spiritual restoration of mankind. He saw in it considerations, as perfect in their fitness as possible to correct the errors, rouse the conscience, converts the souls of men. He speaks of it as the power of God unto salvation. He preached that Gospel, too, with such skill and earnestness as if its success depended upon his own endeavors. Albeit, deep was his conviction that real

efficiency in the work depended upon Divine interposition. His triumphs he ever gratefully ascribed to the agency of God, and the co-operation of that agency was the grand invocation of his most earnest prayers. "I have planted, Apollos watered," &c. However perfect the adaptation of the Gospel and its ministry to the grand end they have in view—that end is never reached apart from the action of the Almighty. This is a truth radiant in every part of the Bible, and this is a truth, the conviction of which has ever deepened in the experience of every true Gospel minister in proportion to the arduousness of his efforts and to the length of his experience. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

Another thing implied in the heart's desire of the apostle is—

Thirdly : *A conviction that this interposition of God is to be obtained by intercessory prayer.* He believed in the efficacy of intercessory prayer in attaining the required agency of Heaven. Hence he prays for others: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." Hence he calls for others to pray for him and his apostolic coadjutors; "Brethren, pray for us, that the word of God may have free course and be glorified." The power of intercessory prayer is seen in the entreaties of Abraham for the men of Sodom, and in Moses for the rebellious Israelites. I know not how it influences the Almighty, nor why it should; but I know that it has, and it does, and that it must be employed if human labor in His cause is ever to be crowned with efficiency. Here then is a true patriot—a man who aims at the highest good of his countrymen—its salvation; and who seeks that end, not only by promoting the Gospel, but by invoking the co-operation of God. The true patriot is a man of prayer. Never did David the king of Israel act more truly a patriot's part than when he breathed this

prayer to heaven:—"Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him." The apostle's patriotism—

## II. RECOGNIZED THE CHARACTERISTIC EVILS OF HIS COUNTRY.

Three evils he indicates in these verses:—*corrupt zealotism, ignorance of Christianity, and self-righteousness.* Here is—

First: *Corrupt Zealotism.* "I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." He himself had been a Jewish zealot. "After the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee." He was, therefore, qualified to pronounce a judgment upon it. The zeal he saw his countrymen everywhere manifesting, in connection with the mere letter and ritual of their religion, he regarded as utterly worthless. Zeal in itself is a noble passion, an important element in every undertaking—in the study, the senate, the Church. There is not much success where it is not. But when it is dissociated from intelligence, it is fraught with evils. Zeal, when directed to wrong objects, such as in efforts to pander to the depraved passions of our nature, or in working out ungodly enterprises, is "zeal without knowledge." Zeal, when directed to right objects in wrong proportions, is "zeal without knowledge." He who is more zealous for the things of the body than things of the mind, things of time than things of eternity, or who is more earnest for the letter than the spirit of Christianity, more solicitous for the interest of a sect than for the well-being of a soul, acts from an ignorant zeal. Zeal, when it cannot assign an intelligent reason for its action, is "zeal without knowledge." The man who acts from a religious feeling uncontrolled by reason, is a fanatic doing violence to his nature. This "zeal without knowledge" was one of the cardinal evils amongst the Jews. They crossed sea and land to make proselytes, rather than to make saints. They were far more anxious about the casket than the jewel, about the externalities of religion than the

realities of truth. Knowledge and zeal should always be associated. The former without the latter, is a well-equipped vessel on a placid sea without the propulsion of steam, billow, or breeze. It may look beautiful as it sleeps on the blue wave, and glistens in the sun, but it can do nothing; it is all but motionless, it will never navigate the ocean, or do the world's business. The latter without the former, is like a bark on the billows with propulsion and no rudder; it may drive on against wind and tide, but it is in jeopardy every hour. Both combined, is like a goodly ship trading from port to port at will, steering clear of dangers, coping gallantly with hostile elements, and fulfilling the missions of its masters. Here is—

Secondly : *Ignorance of Christianity*. "They being ignorant of God's righteousness." By "God's righteousness," here, we understand not that personal rectitude of His character, which in Him is absolute and incorruptible, and which is the standard of excellence throughout the universe, but that *merciful method* by which He makes corrupt men right. What is that method? Here it is in Paul's own language : "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh : that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

The intervention of Christ—the Gospel—is the method. This method makes men righteous, causes the righteousness of the ~~Lord~~ to be fulfilled in them. It does something more than getting the sinner pronounced as right by his Maker, reckoned as right in the court of heaven—it *makes men right!* right in themselves, and right in all their relations to society, the universe, and God. Justification is not merely pronouncing men just, but making them just. It is a moral reality, not a legal fiction. The Gospel is a right-making power. It redeems from all iniquity, and teaches men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Of this method of making men right, the Jews were "ignorant." Ignorance of this is evermore ruinous to man's immortal interests.

Men perish for the lack of this knowledge. In the case of the Jew it was not only ruinous, but culpable. They had the means of knowledge. Their old Scriptures told them in every variety of form that it was by the knowledge of the Messiah that God would justify, make right the nations; that the grand end of the Messiah was to establish judgment—rectitude on the earth. Here is—

Thirdly : *Self-Righteousness*. “They went about to establish their own righteousness.” They considered their own righteousness to consist in their patriarchal descent, and their conformity to the letter of the law. This was their righteousness. In this they gloried as that which distinguished them from all the nations of the earth, and avowed this as all-sufficient to meet the righteous claims of Heaven. The apostle himself once felt this to be his glory. “If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee.” The Pharisee in the temple was a type of the leading religious sect in Judea, and his language is expressive of its spirit : “God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.” Here is—

Fourthly : *Gospel rejection*. “Have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.” This is the grand result of all other evils, and the crowning sin of all. They have *not* submitted to the righteousness of God. As if the apostle had said, “This is the lamentable fact in their history, this is their ruin.” They not only rejected the personal ministry of the Messiah during His sojourn here, but now when His Gospel is preached to them by His apostles, they will not accept it. They refuse the only Physician that can heal their diseases; the only liberator that can break their fetters, the only priest whose sacrifice will atone for their guilt, whose intercessions can make their peace with Heaven.

Such are some of the evils which Paul as a patriot



discovered and deplored in his country. He is no friend who is blind to my faults, and flatters me for virtues I have not ; and he is no patriot who shuts his eyes to his country's crimes, and pours into her ears the most fulsome eulogies. Such spurious patriotism is common ; it rings in the songs of our laureates and their imitators. It streams in the frothy utterances of the smaller men who occupy seats of office in Church and State. It drops in copious flow from the pen of those hireling scribblers whose journals live by flattering the vanity of a nation's heart. The strains of such bards, the speeches of such officials, the articles of such writers, might lead a stranger to infer that Great Britain was innocent of every crime, the paragon of excellence, and the model of nations. Call not this patriotism ; call it moral obliquity, national egotism, servility, or what you will, but call it not true love of country. The parent who has true love for his children will not only be charmed with their virtues, and delighted with their prosperity, but grieved to the core at their vices, and intensely alive to their sufferings and mishaps. The apostle's patriotism.—

III. PROPOSED THE RIGHT METHOD FOR SAVING HIS COUNTRY. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Three great facts seem to be implied in this verse.

First : *That righteousness is essential to the well-being of the people.* The apostle's strong desire is that his brethren should be saved ; that is, made happy here and hereafter ; and his language throughout the chapter, and through a large portion of the epistle, implies that righteousness was essential to that end. There is no true happiness without righteousness. This is his conviction—a conviction which the theology of the Jew would bind him to accept, and which he did accept ; for the apostle takes it for granted that they were struggling after this righteousness as a grand desideratum. And what thoughtful man will deny the harmony of this conviction with Eternal truth ? All the social, political, religious, moral evils under which all men and nations groan, spring from the want

of righteousness. As no individual man can be happy until he has been made thoroughly right in heart, and feel that the Great God treats him as a righteous man, so no people or country can. This rectitude is the only element that can work off all the evils that afflict mankind, and give them the tone and blessedness of a vigorous health. This is the only key-note that can set the discordant elements of the world to music. The righteousness which is essential to the salvation of a soul, is that which alone "exalteth a nation."

Another fact implied in these words is—

Secondly: *That the grand aim of the moral law is to promote righteousness.* Righteousness is the end of the law. "For Moses," says the apostle in the next verse, "describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them." The law was holy, just, and good, a transcript of the Divine character, given to man to guide and stimulate him in righteousness. Conformity to it is righteousness in the creature. Angels conform to it and they are righteous. The law reveals and rewards righteousness.

The other fact implied in these words is—

Thirdly: *That the righteousness which the law aimed to promote is to be obtained by faith in Christ.* "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." The word "end" here does not mean end in the sense of *termination*, but in the sense of *design*. Christ did not abolish law, on the contrary He fulfilled it. He wrought out its principles in a grand life; He demonstrated its majesty in a wonderful death. Instead of releasing His disciples from obligation to the law, He brings the law to them with a mightier aspect and a greater force of motive. The word therefore, is to be taken in the sense of design. It means that Christ does what the law purposed doing—promote righteousness in man. What the law aimed at, it could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, through the depravity of human nature. Men sinned, and they became unrighteous in fact, and were treated as unrighteous by the government of God. They were brought into condemnation and they felt

an impassable gulf between them and their Maker. The law could do nothing for them; it could neither rectify their errors nor reconcile them to God. Its bright flashes reveal to them their wickedness, and its rumbling thunders prophesy to them their doom. The more profoundly they felt their condition, the more profoundly they felt that by the deeds of the law no flesh living could be justified or made right. Such is the condition of the sinner in relation to law. "The likeliest thing to it in human experience is," says Dr. Chalmers, "when a decree of bankruptcy without a discharge has come forth on the man who has long struggled with his difficulties, and is now irrevocably sunk under the weight of them. There is an effectual drag laid upon this man's activity. The hand of diligence is forthwith slackened, when all the fruits of diligence are thus liable to be seized upon, and that by a rightful claim of such magnitude as no possible strenuousness can meet or satisfy. The processes of business come to a stand, or are suspended when others are standing by ready to devour the proceeds of business so soon as they are realized, or at least to divert them from the use of the unhappy man and the good of his family. The spirit of industry dies within him, when he finds that he can neither make aught for himself, nor from the enormous mass of his obligations make any sensible advance towards his liberation. In these circumstances he loses all heart and all hope for exertion of any sort; and either breaks forth into recklessness or is chilled into inactivity by despair. And it is precisely so in the case of a sinner towards God. If he feels as he ought, he feels as if the mountains of his iniquities had separated him from his Maker. There is the barrier of an unsettled controversy between them, which, do his uttermost, he cannot move away; and the strong though secret power of this is a chief ingredient in the lethargy of nature. There is a haunting jealousy of God which keeps us at a distance from Him. There is the same willing forgetfulness of Him, that there is of any other painful or disquieting object of contemplation. God, when viewed singly as the Lawgiver, is also viewed as the Judge who must

condemn, as the rightful creditor whose payments or whose penalties are alike overwhelming. We are glad to make our escape from all this dread and discouragement, into the sweet oblivion of nature. The world becomes our hiding place from the Deity, and in despair of making good our eternity by our works, we work but for the interests of time; and because denizens of earth, we, estranged from the hopes of heaven, never once set forth in good earnest upon its preparation."

At this point the apostle's method of making the sinner righteous comes in. What is that? *Faith in Christ*. "Every one that believeth" in Him is made righteous—"Believeth!" in what? Not in what men say about Him; not merely in the facts of His life, and the purpose of His mission, but in Him as the all-sufficient Saviour of the world. "Believeth!" How? Not with a mere traditional faith, but with the deepest conviction of the soul. Not merely with the intellect, but with the heart. "*With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.*" Believeth with a faith that brings Christ's own Spirit home to us, and gives us a new heart and a new life. This is the power to make men righteous—the power by which man obtains pardon for his past offences, and an effective influence enabling him to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

Did Paul's patriotism recognize the right method, think you? I believe that the philosophy of the human mind, and the history of human experience, unite with the Bible in declaring that it is the *only* method that can succeed. I depreciate not for a moment some of the salutary elements that are at work in the world, such as intellectual education, scientific discoveries, wholesome legislation, and a healthful class of literature; whilst I maintain that all will prove utterly abortive apart from the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is the power of God unto salvation. Let those who aspire to the name of patriots, imitate Paul in the instrumentality he employed to raise his country. The advance of our England in all that gives real worth, nobility, and happiness to a people, depends upon the multiplication of patriots after the type of Paul.

# A Homiletic Glance at the Acts of the Apostles.

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Able expositions of the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, describing the manners, customs, and localities described by the inspired writers ; also interpreting their words, and harmonizing their formal discrepancies, are, happily, not wanting amongst us. But the eduction of its WIDEST truths and highest suggestions is still a felt desideratum. To some attempt at the work we devote these pages. We gratefully avail ourselves of all exegetical helps within our reach ; but to occupy our limited space with any lengthened archæological, geographical, or philological remarks, would be to miss our aim ; which is not to make bare the mechanical process of the study of Scripture, but to reveal its spiritual results.

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## SECTION TWELFTH.—Acts iv. 23—37.

“And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is : who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things ? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings : and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal ; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together ; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul : neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own ; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus : and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked : for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles’ feet : and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses, who by the



apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet."—Acts iv. 23—37.

SUBJECT :—*A Specimen of Christian Socialism.*

THE apostles Peter and John having baffled the Sanhedrim in its attempts violently to restrain them in their mission to extend the knowledge of Jesus of Nazareth, return at once to the company of their fellow-disciples. The passage which comes now for our consideration, is a brief narrative of their return to the society of their brotherhood, the profound feelings with which the brotherhood received their communications, the spirit which inspired the body, and their thorough communion both in religious sentiment and in common life. The narrative gives us such a view of *Christian Socialism* as throws the secular thing called by that name into contempt, and reveals the lamentable imperfection connected even with the highest form of spiritual fellowship now existing on this earth. From it we learn that the socialism which these first Christians enjoyed was *attractive, religious, and amalgamating*. It was:—

I. ATTRACTIVE. No sooner were the two apostles free, than they returned at once—as if drawn by a magnetic force—to their chosen society. “And being let go, they went to their own company.” They “*went to their own* :”—Their own people, friends, or brethren ; those who were one with them in the most vital things of existence. There were two things that made “*their own*” people attractive to them, and which are always found in connection with true Christian Socialism—*responsive listening* and *sympathetic co-operation*. They had something to say, and they felt that in that brotherhood they should have responsive listeners. They wanted to report all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. Whether they wished to “report” this to awaken the congratulations of their brethren on account of their triumphs, or to get their counsels on account of their difficulties, or both, you have no data to

determine with certainty. We know this, however, that there is a law of mind which urges a man to communicate that to others to which he attaches some great importance, and the more pressing the thing is in its nature the more forcible is that law. It is also a law to seek the most responsive listeners to such communications. To the men who will give us the most cordial listening, we go with the thing we have to say, rather than to those who are hostile or even indifferent. Hence, naturally, these apostles went to "*their own*" to report that to which they attached such moment. There, they knew they would have open ears and receptive hearts. True Christian Socialism involves this responsive listening. There, the speaking brother whose heart is full, will find an audience all candor and love. Such a thing as this is not found in secular socialism. There, you have the cavilling and the captious. Nor is it often found, alas, in the fellowship of churches. There, is too frequently the prejudice that deafens the ear and closes the heart.

The other thing which made their "own company" attractive to them, and which is always found in true Christian Socialism, was *sympathetic co-operation*. So strong is our social nature, that we instinctively crave the sympathy of others to enable us to bear our burdens and discharge our mission. Without this, the strongest of us are weak either to endure or to toil. Without the breeze of social sympathy, the sails of our spirits would collapse in the voyage of duty. Peter and John had been engaged in a severe struggle, and had suffered much; and naturally did their hearts turn to that circle which was in thorough sympathy with their sentiments and aims. All the while they were battling with the Sanhedrim, and the night they spent in prison, they knew that their "own company" were thinking of and praying for them, and to their fellowship they hastened the moment they were "*let go*." In true Christian Socialism there is always a deep, genuine sympathy in all, with everything connected with the cause of God in truth. There is a weeping with those that weep, a rejoicing with those that rejoice. What one feels in fact, the other feels in sympathy.

Thus, the Christian Socialism of these early times was an *attractive* thing. Kindred souls flowed to it as rivers to the sea. What circle on earth is more attractive to kindred spirits than the circle in which there is a common object of supreme affection, a common class of dominant thoughts, a common cause engrossing the chief activities of being? This is the ideal of Christian fellowship. Would it were realized on earth, and that every church were a true home of love.

From the narrative we learn that the socialism of these first Christians was—

II. RELIGIOUS. “And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is : who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things ?” &c. This whole passage, which extends through several verses, shows that a *profound religiousness* pervaded every member of that “company.” Godliness was the vital air that fanned the lungs of their spiritual being. “They were filled with the Holy Ghost.” God was the grand fact in their consciousness, the one centre in their hearts. In their horizon He stood as the one majestic object to which they traced all the beauty and the goodness they beheld. Their religiousness here comes out in two forms—that of *ascription*, and that of *supplication*. In their ascription there is a recognition of several things.

First : *There is their recognition of His authority.* “And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God. The word here rendered “*Lord*,” is Δέσποτα, not Κύριε. From it our English word “despot” is taken, and it stands for authority that is absolute. Deeply did this company now feel the absoluteness of the Divine control.

Secondly : *There is their recognition of His creatorship.* “Thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.” They felt Him to be not merely the Sovereign Lord of all things, but the Almighty Maker.

Thirdly : *There is their recognition of His revelation.* “Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.” This quotation, which is from the second Psalm, shows their conviction that David there spoke not by his own wisdom, or of himself, but by the inspiration of God concerning the Great Messiah. What David said on this point, was Divine revelation concerning the opposition of worldly authorities to the Lord and His Christ. The words contain several things concerning the hostility of worldly men to Christ. *Furiousness.* “The heathen rage.” The word ἐφρούαξαν, designates the neighing or snorting of highly-excited horses—horses excited somewhat like the pawing, prancing war-horse in the book of Job. It is metaphorically used, to represent the noise and fury of insolent and overbearing men, and well designates the furious temper and the insolence of Christ’s enemies towards Him. *Vanity.* They “imagine vain things.” Those who aspire to thwart the plans of Christ, to crush Christianity, live in a region of mad dreams. They are agents of consummate folly, and must fall victims to their own delusions. *Combination.* “The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together.” They were banded together against Christ. Ungodly men, that differ widely in other things, are one in their antagonism to Christ.

Fourthly : *There is their recognition of His predestination.* They regarded Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, the people of Israel, and all the enemies of Christ, as wicked agents blindly and unconsciously working out the eternal plans of Heaven. “For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together.” He who sees the end from the beginning, conducts the government of the universe after a pre-concerted plan, so vast that it comprehends alike things of the greatest magnitude and minuteness. Nothing can ever occur that is not in that plan,

and the most hellish spirit can do no more than contribute his part towards it. How great is God! He maketh His enemies do His work.

Their religiousness comes out not only in their *ascription*, but in their *supplication*. "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus." Mark the substance of their prayer. They invoked *personal protection*. "Behold their threatenings." The threatenings refer to those contained in the 17th and 21st verses of the chapter—threatenings addressed by the rulers to the apostles. The meaning of the invocation, "Behold their threatenings," may be, "Guard those who are the objects of those threatenings, and thus frustrate the evil designs of our enemies."

They invoked the *power of spiritual usefulness*. "That with all boldness they may speak thy word." Though they pray for personal protection, it is only as a means to discharge their official functions. They wanted their lives preserved, not because they dreaded the death of martyrdom, not because of themselves, but because they had a paramount desire to be successful promoters of the new religion.

They invoked *miraculous interposition*. "By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus." The meaning is, "Enable us to work miracles in the name of Christ, that we may be more successful in spreading abroad the knowledge of Christ." This power Christ had promised (Mark xvi. 17, 18), and they had an authority, therefore, to seek it.

Such is the beautiful prayer, the spirit of which is this, "Deliver us from our enemies, and grant us miraculous power, not for our own gratification or aggrandizement, but in order that we may speak the word of God with greater fluency and force."

Mark the *success* of the prayer. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled



together ; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."

In the answer there was a *miraculous sign*. "The place was shaken where they were assembled together." perhaps they were in the same as that in which they were assembled on the day of Pentecost (chap. ii. 2), of which this scene was a partial repetition. The sign here given of God's presence was familiar to the saints of the Old Testament. (Exod. xix. 18, Ps. lxxviii. 8.) "The special presence of the Holy Ghost is accompanied with a sign to the senses—an earthquake as before, with, probably, the appearance of flame. Both phenomena are mentioned by Virgil as marks of Divine favor. Coincidences between the facts of revelation and the opinions and superstitions of the heathen world, occur too frequently to be accounted for by the supposition that they are accidental. Such resemblances seem to admit one of two solutions ; either that God condescended to use methods which men had already without authority supposed Him to use, or that men *had* an authority for so believing, viz., a tradition which was derived to them from a distant age, through some unknown channel. The former hypothesis seems better to account for the appearance of the star to the Magi ; the latter will apply to the present passage, to chap ii. 3, 19, and to the Gentile anticipations of the incarnation." \*

In the answer there was the *impartation of Divine power*. They were all "filled." The remarks made on the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost are applicable here.† The power which they sought to preach the Gospel, came. "They spake the word of God with boldness."

Such, then, are the forms of *ascription* and *supplication* in which their religiousness was expressed on this occasion. A feature in their devotions worth noticing is—*their thorough unity*. They were all "with one accord." Some have asked, How could it have been with one accord ? Did they all use

\* Webster and Wilkinson.

† See "Homilist," Vol. III., Third Series, p. 69.

these words as a part of a liturgy which they had amongst them, or did they all receive a special inspiration prompting in all hearts the same aspirations, thoughts, and words? Or did one inspired voice lead the devotions, and express the common thought and desire of all? It scarcely matters; sufficient is it for us to know that there was perfect unity in the worship.

From the narrative we learn the Christian Socialism of the first Christians was—

III. AMALGAMATING. “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.” The inspired writers had not that dread of repetition in their productions which belong to modern authors. The community of goods here recorded, Luke has stated before in the previous chapter. He repeats it, perhaps, in order that we may dwell on the extraordinary state of Christian society at that time, or in order to show that however tumultuous and violent were the rage of their enemies, there was a blessed peace and a sensible security amongst themselves. Outward tempests produced no ripple on their social stream. God was in the midst of them and they rejoiced. Four thoughts are suggested in relation to the amalgamating force.

First: *It was most hearty and practical.* The thorough unity of soul expressed itself in the surrender of every member's worldly possessions for the common good. The definition of friendship ascribed to Aristotle by Diogenes Laertius, which stated that it consists in one soul residing in two bodies, is actualized here. They were of “one soul,” and all the members of the body united in acting out the common volition. “Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own.” What was once their private property they call no more their own, they regard it as the common possession of the brotherhood. The rising tide of brotherly affection bore away from their hearts that love of gain which is a power in all unconverted men, and which has

grown into a passion in this age, making mammon the God of the world. This surrender of personal interest was not only the expression of thorough unity, but the best method of preserving it. It is the narrow and the mean that disorganize society, and bring all the members of the social system into conflict and confusion.

Secondly: *It consisted with a diversity of position and service.* On this occasion, where we read of their all being *one soul*, and having a community of goods, we have an account of the apostles bearing witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and of their having placed at their disposal the common property. "As many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." The name of one is especially mentioned who did this, "Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet." He is singled out here because he was a man of distinction, and was to play an important part in the history of the future of the young Church. These verses show a diversity of position and service in that social circle that was so united in soul. *The apostles were both the spiritual and economical heads of that community.* Material bodies may get so thoroughly amalgamated as to lose all their individual peculiarities, and be fused into one common mass. Not so with souls. Minds, however closely welded together by social love, will retain for ever their individuality of being, position and mission. Though the body is moved by one soul, the eye is still the eye, and the hand the hand. Social unity is not at all the uniformity of a regiment moving with one step and attired in the same garb, but rather like the variety of landscape, each object clad in its own costume and bending to the breeze according to its own structure and style. It is not the sound of one monotonous note, but the echo of all the varying notes of being, brought into sweetest harmony.

Thirdly : *It was produced by the gracious favor of heaven.* "Great grace was upon them all." Grace means favor (John i. 16), and the favor here may mean either the favor with which they were regarded by men, or the favor which they had received from God. Grace was upon them all in the two senses; the latter is the idea most probably here. The grace or love of God was the effect of that love and liberality which existed amongst them. We must feel God's love towards us before we can feel true love to our brethren. Piety is the parent of philanthropy. God's grace it is that brings souls into loving harmony. No social contracts, no code of rules, no uniformity of belief can do it; it must be the love of God consuming our native selfishness, and opening those Divine fountains of sympathy within us which sin has sealed. Let this great grace come upon all the Churches now, and such a holy unity will exist amongst them, that they will have favor from all the world, and mighty power in bearing "witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus."

Such is the phase of Christian Socialism which we have in this narrative. In what a sublime contrast does it stand to all the socialism of the world, and how does it show, too, the imperfection of even the highest Christian Socialism now existing in the Church. Where is that *attractive religious amalgamating socialism* now? Would that there were on one spot of this earth a circle, however small, where it was perfectly and fully unfolded. Who would not admire it—what heart would not feel its attractions. It would be the heavenly Jerusalem in miniature. It would be an Eden in the world's social desert.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is .

For brethren to dwell together in unity !

It is like the precious ointment upon the head,

That ran down upon the beard, *even Aaron's beard* :

That went down to the skirts of his garments ;

As the dew of Hermon,

And as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion :

For there the Lord commanded the blessing,

*Even life for evermore.*"

# Germ of Thought.

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SUBJECT :—*Heaven's Description of the Sainted Dead.*

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."—Rev. xiv. 13.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Fifty-eighth.

**H**ERE is a VOICE from heaven. Voices from earth are plentiful; they load our air and din our ears. We have voices from the market and voices from the Parliament, voices from the Church and voices from the college, voices on every subject and in every key. They are contradictory and unsatisfactory; they solve not the deepest problems of the soul. Thank God there is a voice from Heaven; let us listen to it. It comes from Infallibility itself, and teaches the most momentous questions of interest and destiny. Notice—

I. HEAVEN'S DESCRIPTION OF THE CHARACTER OF THE SAINTED DEAD. They "die in the Lord." Their character was that of vital union with Christ. The Scriptures represent this union by a great variety of figure. It is compared to the union of a building with its foundation stone—its existence depends upon it; to that of the branch and the vine—its strength, foliage, fruit, life, of the one, depend upon the sap it derives from the other; to that of the spirit and the body—the former being the source of animation, the impulse of activity, and the guide of the movements of the latter. These figures confessedly indicate a union the most close, and the most vital. This union may include two things—

First: *Their existence in His affections.* We live in the hearts of those who love us. Children so thoroughly live in the affections of their loving parents, that they control their plans and inspire their efforts. Because the child lives in



the heart of the affectionate parent, the parent lives and labors for his child. In this sense, Christ's disciples live in Him; they are in His heart; He thinks upon them; He plans for them; He works for them; He causes all things to work together for their good. This union may include—

Secondly: *Their existence in His character.* Without figure, we *live in the character of those we admire and love.* Arnold's most loyal pupils live in his character now. We see their old master in their books, and hear him in their sermons. Christ is the grand object of their love, and the chief subject of their thought, and to please Him was the grand purpose of their life. As loving children identify themselves with all that pertains to their parents, so they feel a vital interest in all that relates to the cause of Christ. Thus Paul felt. "I live," said he, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." This character implies two things. (1) A moral change. Men are not born in this state. "If any man is in Christ he is a new creature." The change is so great that the man must be conscious of it. This character implies—(2) A judicial change. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Their sins are pardoned, their iniquities are forgiven, they "have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Such is the character of the sainted dead as here described. "They die in the Lord." Notice—

II. HEAVEN'S DESCRIPTION OF THE CONDITION OF THE SAINTED DEAD. "*Blessed are the dead,*" &c.

First: *Their blessedness is in rest from all trying labor.* Not rest from work, for work is the condition of blessedness; but from all trying labor, all anxious toil, all wearying, annoying, irritating, fruitless toil. (1) Rest from all trying labor pertaining to our *physical subsistence.* By the sweat of our brow here we have to eat bread. Not so yonder. (2) Rest from all trying labor pertaining to *intellectual culture.* How much trying labor is there here to train our faculties, and to get knowledge. Much study is a weariness to the

flesh. Not so yonder. (3) Rest from all trying labor pertaining to our *spiritual cultivation*. Here we have to wrestle hard against our spiritual foes, and often have to cry out in the struggle, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Not so yonder. (4) Rest from all trying labor to *benefit our fellow-men*. To do good here is a trying work. The ignorance, the callousness, the ingratitude of men whom we seek to help, often distract and pain the heart. Not so yonder. Rest! What a cheering word! It is the couch of the weary traveller, it is the haven for the storm-tossed mariner, it is the home for the veteran who after many a battle has won the victory.

Secondly: *Their blessedness is in the influence of their works.* "Their works do follow them." No one act truly done for Christ, and in His spirit, will be lost. All good works springing from faith in Christ, shall follow the worker into the eternal world—follow him in their blessed influence upon himself, in the happy results they have produced in others, and in the gracious acknowledgment of God. The moment we appear on the other side, we shall hear the voice addressing us, *Call the laborers and give them their hire*. We shall then find that the smallest effort is not lost.

Thirdly: *Their blessedness begins immediately after death.* "From henceforth, saith the Spirit." From the moment of death the blessedness begins. This stands opposed to two errors. (1) That there is an obliviousness of soul until the resurrection. And to the error—(2) That there are purgatorial fires which must follow death. "From henceforth." Not from the waking of the soul into consciousness after the sleep of centuries; not from the extinction of purgatorial fires—but from death. "To day shalt thou be with me;" "Absent from the body: present with the Lord."

Fourthly: *Their blessedness is vouched by the Spirit of God.* "From henceforth, saith the Spirit." Who declares this blessedness? An erring Church? Not even the highest angel. It is THE SPIRIT; He who knows the present and future; He who hears the last sigh of every saint on earth, and his

first note of triumph. The Spirit saith it. Let us believe it with an unquestioning faith. The Spirit saith it: let us adore Him for His revelation.

This subject speaks *comfort* to the bereaved. Weep not inordinately for the good that are gone. Sorrow not as those who are without hope. Your loved ones still live; they “rest from their labours and their works do follow them.” The subject speaks *courage* to the faint. You disciples of the Lord who feel the journey of life to be trying; the battle to be severe; and feel at times depressed—take heart; yet a little while all your trials will be over. You shall “rest from your labours; and your works shall follow you.” *Go thou thy way until the end be, and thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.*

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SUBJECT :—*Church Members: the Seemingly Feeble, the Vitally Necessary.*

“Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary.”—1 Cor. xii. 22.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Fifty-ninth.

THE church at Corinth was a church in a state of faction. Contentions amongst its members were rife, touching the merits of different teachers and the superiority of different gifts. Much of these epistles, and the whole of this chapter, bear against that wretched spirit of dissension. For this purpose, in this chapter he shows that the true Church, like the human body, has amongst its members *variety, unity, and dependence*. The variety springs from a diversity of gifts sovereignly distributed by the Eternal Spirit. These endowments were of three classes—*miraculous, native, and attained*. All men differ in their endowments; no two are alike. This variety characterizes all the works of God, is the grandest feature of their beauty. In the Church’s landscape there are plants of all kinds and gradations, from the frail flower to the tall cedars of Lebanon, all fed by the same elements, and shone on by the same sun. In connection with

all the variety, there is essential *unity*. One heart beats in all, one soul animates all. The apostle intimates that the true Church is as thoroughly one as the human body. What the body is to the soul, Christ is to the Church—its temple, organ, symbol. Uniformity is not unity. The apostle shows, moreover, that there is a mutual dependence through all. One member of the body depends upon another, and is vital to the whole; one cannot say to the other, "I have no need of thee." And in the text he says that even the seemingly feeble is the more necessary.

From the text we infer—

I. THAT THE TRUE CHURCH HAS MEMBERS SEEMINGLY FEEBLE. There are two classes of church members who to the material eye seem feeble.

First: *Those who are destitute of that to which the world attaches the idea of power.* Great *wealth* is power in the world's estimation, and he that is without it is feeble. The vast majority of Christians have been, and still are, destitute of this. Not a few in all ages have been amongst the poorest of the poor. The carnal eye cannot see much strength or worth where there is poverty. The highest and most perfect form of excellence that ever appeared on this earth, appeared in the form of worldly destitution; hence Christ appeared as a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness. *High officialism* is power in the estimation of the world. It sees power in the general marshalling his armies, in the statesman guiding the destinies of his country, in the monarch whose will moves the nations. A small amount of piety in such quarters is seen, magnified, and lauded at once. One simple act of goodness wrought by him who rules an empire, shall be chronicled in every journal, beat in the song of the laureate, and be rung by the trumpet of fame half the world over; but a long life of goodness and devotion down in the region of obscurity where many Christians live, passes away unnoticed and unpraised. It seems feeble. *Great mental endowments* are power in the estimation of the world. Power is seen in

him who can compose music like Handel, write books like Shakspeare, or fulminate words like Demosthenes. Goodness in such men will be soon recognized. The majority of Christians are not often blessed with such endowments, and, therefore, however good, they seem feeble.

The class of Christians who seem feeble are—

Secondly : *Those who work out their mission in a quiet and unostentatious spirit.* Most Christians, and all who have most of the spirit of their Master, of all grades of life and degrees of endowment, thus work. The most powerful things are the most silent. The stream of life in spring runs up through the veins of every herb and plant, blade and tree, covering every zone of the earth with verdure and with beauty, silently and unheard. Gravitation wheels suns and systems about immensity without noise. In this quiet way true goodness works, and therefore it is often deemed feeble.

From the text we infer—

II. THAT THE SEEMINGLY FEEBLE MEMBERS ARE VITALLY NECESSARY. “Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary.” The comparison here is not between Christians and unconverted persons, but between Christians themselves, between members of the same church, between that class of members who are distinguished for great endowments, and between those who have no such distinctions. Paul’s language implied that he believed they were *both* “*necessary*.” It is very important to have men of great endowments in connection with the Church, men of learning, men of eloquence. Such men have often rendered signal service in the cause of truth. But men of pre-eminent piety, whose piety and not their endowments, are their distinction, are even *more* necessary. The general thought, perhaps, is, *that spiritual excellence is more necessary in the cause of Christianity, than mental or any other endowments.* Great piety, with feeble endowments, is more necessary than brilliant endowments with little piety. The strong leg, the sinewy arm, the broad brow, the flashing eye, are to the body



what splendid endowments are to the Church, the most attractive and imposing. But the brain, the lungs, the heart, those *feeble* unseen members, are to the body what piety is to the Church, the most essential to its existence. The body may live without arm, leg, eye, but not without those vital organs. The Church may get on without great endowments, but dies without piety.

First : *Great piety is more "necessary" to the individual himself than great endowments.* Great endowments not only often exist apart from piety, but often militate against it ; they often tend to foster pride, and elate with vanity. Genius often lights a torch that leads the soul astray. Men are saved, without great endowments, but never without piety.

Secondly : *Great piety is more "necessary" to the Church than great endowments.* Great talents in the Church must not be underrated. We thank God that He gives His Church in every age some men of power. These rise like mountains in the midst of it. They are not only a shelter and defence, but they catch the first beams of the morning, and send them down ; the first showers from the clouds, and pour them into the valleys. Albeit, the Church owes more to signal piety than to their influence. It is not the exegesis of the scholar, the reasonings of the philosopher, the eloquence of the orator, or the strains of the bard, that have done most for the Church, but the holy lives, the earnest prayers, the lovely spirit of humble saints.

Thirdly : *Great piety is more "necessary" to the world than great endowments.* What does society require most at the present moment ? New chapters in the book of science, new statutes in the codes of law, new inventions in the sphere of art, new openings in the field of trade ? No ! but more living excellence, more embodied piety. This is the salt which can alone prevent its corruption, the intercessory breath that can avert its threatened doom, the light that can reveal to all the path of peace. At the last day it will be found that the world's benefactors were the obscure sons of piety and prayer.

The practical thoughts rising from this subject show that

*the conditions of our highest interests are available to all.* If our well-being and influence for good depended upon great talents, the case of the millions would be hopeless, but consisting as it does in simple goodness, all can attain the happiness they seek. The subject urges us to recognize and reverence goodness wherever seen. See it in the humblest cottage, and in a frame worn and wan with poverty; and, seeing it, honor it as a ray from "The Father of Lights."



SUBJECT :—*Divine Influence.*

"I shall be as the dew unto Israel."—Hosea xiv. 5.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Sixtiety.

**I**SRAEL had sinned; he had departed from God, nevertheless God proclaimed Himself merciful and gracious towards him. For He says, "I will be as the dew unto Israel." The dew here referred to, as we apprehend it, is the beautiful emblem of Divine grace.

I. Divine influence, like the dew, is **UNSEEN**. The dew steals down to the earth, and the most careful observer cannot see it as it descends. Even so is it with the coming of Divine grace. The greatest things we know of are unseen. God, the human soul, thought, truth, love, the atonement of Christ, and Divine influence are all unseen. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation."

II. Divine influence, like the dew, is **SILENT**. We hear the pattering of the rain, the murmuring of the brook, the hum of the bee, the melody of the bird; but we hear not the light, we hear not the dew. The gates of the morning open, and the gates of the evening shut, but we hear them not. Even so the most delicate ear cannot hear the descent of the dew. And so, too, is it with the coming of Divine grace. The greatest powers are not only unseen in their essence, they are also silent in their operations.

III. Divine influence, like the dew, is GENTLE. The dew is so gentle that it falls upon the weakest flower without hurting or oppressing it. So, too, gentleness is a property of Divine grace. "God hath abounded unto us in all wisdom and *prudence*;" and it is well for us that prudence is one of the attributes of Deity. He continually carries all the suns, and stars, and systems of the past into the present, and into the future as easily as your shepherd carries in his arms the little lambs; as gently and sweetly as your mother carries her little babe. The highest archangel cannot comprehend "the *thunder of His power*," and yet He deals prudently with man. In His great prudence He has given us "the man Christ Jesus," and He said to His disciples, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." Hence every true believer may take up the language of David and address God thus, "Thy gentleness hath made me great." And all the people of God have reason to exclaim, "He crowneth us with *loving* kindness and *tender* mercies." The crown which God puts upon the head of His people, is not hard, but soft. It is all-glorious without, all-glorious *within*. It is richly lined with the velvety bloom of peculiar love. For it is a crown not only of "kindness and mercy," but of "*loving* kindness and *tender* mercy."

IV. Divine influence, like the dew, is REVIVING. It is the source of many great blessings. The heat of yesterday's sun has parched the face of nature, but the dew falls through the night, and by it the withered plant and drooping flower are revived and beautified. Even so Divine grace, upon the soul withered up by sin, imparts a freshness and a beauty to its faded life. It makes bad men good and good men better. It makes the profligate pure and the abandoned amiable. It "beautifies the meek with salvation." The flowers and fruits of holiness can no more be produced without Divine influence, than the flowers and fruits of autumn can be produced without the sun, the rain, and the dew. Divine influence is the fountain of spiritual life, growth, strength, expansion,

beauty, fragrance, and fruitfulness, in every individual family and Church. "I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily," &c.

V. Divine influence, like the dew, is ABUNDANT. The dew bespangles all the fields, forests, and gardens of our beautiful world. The humblest flower has its own drop of dew. The dew-drops at early dawn are countless as sunbeams in the summer noon. The dew, therefore, is a fine emblem of the abundance of Divine grace. God is not only rich in wisdom, power, holiness, justice, and truth, but He is also rich in mercy and grace. In Christ there is grace to enlighten, grace to pardon, grace to purify, grace to strengthen, grace to comfort, grace to beautify, and grace to glorify every human spirit.

VI. Divine influence, like the dew, is FREE. The dew falls as freely upon the barren rock as upon fertile soil, as copiously upon the sterile desert as upon the fruitful garden, as sweetly upon the rough fern as upon the delicate rose, as lightly upon the common grass as upon the bosom of the lily. Even so Divine grace is universally free. The most precious temporal blessings we possess are free to all. Light, air, water, and dew, are all free. There is an abundance of goods in the world's market; enough of fine food and rich raiment to supply the wants of all mankind. But they are not free; they can be obtained only by those who pay a high price for them. But Divine grace, more precious than all the treasures of earth, may be obtained by all, "without money and without price." This jewel of God is free to all as the light, as the air, as the water, and as the dew. This precious jewel is ours simply for the asking. With David, therefore, our prayer should ever be, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy *free* spirit."

JOHN DUNLOR.

# Biblical Criticism.

## THE CODEX SINAITICUS:—*Various Readings.*

### ADDITIONS.

Mark xiii. 1.—διδάσκαλε is repeated:—διδάσκαλε, διδάσκαλε.

Mark xiii. 7.—ὁρᾶτε before μὴ θροεῖσθε.

Mark xv. 46.—μεγαν after λίθον.

### OMISSIONS.

Mark xii. 4.—λιθοβολήσαντες.

Mark xii. 32.—Θεός. So also Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles.

Mark xiii. 8.—κατὰ τόπους, καὶ ἔσονται λιμοὶ καὶ ταραχαι.

Mark xiii. 14.—τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ Δανιὴλ τοῦ προφήτου.

Mark xiv. 19.—καὶ ἄλλος, μή τι ἐγώ.

Mark xiv. 22.—φάγετε. So also Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles.

Mark xiv. 24.—καινῆς.

Mark xiv. 27.—ἐν ἐμοὶ, ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ταύτῃ.

Mark xiv. 30.—ἡ δὲ.

Mark xiv. 68.—καὶ ἀλέκτωρ ἐφώνησε.

Mark xiv. 70.—καὶ ἡ λαλιά σου ὁμοιάζει. So also Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles.

Mark xiv. 72.—ἐκ δευτέρου. δὲς also is omitted.

The reader will observe that the omissions in verses 30, 68, and 72, bring the narrative of Peter's denial into closer agreement with that in the other Gospels.

Mark xv. 3.—This verse stands as in Stephens's text, omitting the clause, αὐτος δὲ οὐδὲν ἀπεκρίνατο.

Mark xv. 28.—This verse is altogether wanting.

Mark xv. 39.—κράξας.

In this Codex, St. Mark's Gospel ends at chap. xvi., ver. 8.

The remainder, 9—20, stands in the Alexandrine Codex, the Codex Ephraemi, and the Codex Bezae. It is wanting in the Vatican. It is quoted by Irenæus; but it continued long to be omitted from manuscripts. Probably



it was of somewhat later date than the former part of the Gospel. The internal evidence—which we cannot here detail—seems to favor the notion, that, *if written by St Mark, it was intended rather as a document supplementary to the preceding, than to form with it a continuous narrative.*

#### SUBSTITUTIONS.

Mark xii. 4.—*και ητιμησαν*, instead of *ἀπέστειλαν ἡτιμημένον*.

Mark xiii. 10.—*προς τον λαον δεῖ*, instead of *εις παντα τὰ ἔθνη δεῖ*. But this is altered to *πρῶτον δεῖ*, without the *λαον*.

Mark xiv. 24.—*ὅπερ πολλῶν*, for *περὶ πολλῶν*. So also Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles.

Mark xiv. 40.—*καταβεβαρημενοι*, for *βεβαρημένοι*.

Mark xiv. 47.—*ὠτάριον*, for *ὠτίον*.

Mark xiv. 65.—*ελαβον*, for *ἔβαλλον*.

Mark xv. 8.—*αναβας*, for *ἀναβοήσας*. So also Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles.

Mark xv. 40.—One of the correctors reads *Ιωσήτος* for *Ιωσή*. So also Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles. The same in ver. 47.

Mark xv. 45.—*πτῶμα*, for *σῶμα*. So also Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles.

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## The Chair of Theology.

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[This position we have rather been elected to by others, than arrogantly assumed of ourselves. Studios young men, in and out of orders, are adopting the custom of asking us for information and advice respecting a course of theological study, the choice of books, and the like. The thought has occurred, that it would be for their advantage, and our convenience, to throw such remarks as we are able to offer into a systematic form, once for all, that our correspondents may be referred to a standing document.]

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In considering the Evidences of Revelation, the subject which comes next in order, we distinguish two cases:—

First, the person to whom the revelation was originally made.

Second, the person who now reads the record of the original revelation.

In the first case, it is necessary to suppose that the revelation generally included its own evidence. No evidence

external to revelation itself, seems sufficient for the purpose of producing the highest conviction of truth and authority.

Revelation is such a communication from God as involves a singular and certain conviction, not only that the person is spoken to, but that God is the Speaker, a direct and immediate manifestation of God as the Person by whom the communication is made.

In accordance with this, Bishop Pearson writes thus in his "Exposition of the Creed," Article I. :—

"Those, then, to whom God did immediately speak Himself, or by an angel representing God, and so being in His stead, and bearing His name, (of which I shall need here to make no distinction) those persons, I say, to whom God did so reveal Himself, did by virtue of the same *Revelation* perceive, know, and assure themselves that He which spake to them was God ; so that at the same time they clearly understood both what was delivered, and by whom."

The core, therefore, of this Divine Speech, lies in the influence on the mind of the prophet producing such knowledge. And this influence we call Inspiration. Whether the prophet is directed to go and write down the communication, or whether he is irresistibly impelled to utter it at once, that is, to *prophecy*, does not seem a question of essential importance.

A miracle is a mode of revelation which accompanies and confirms the other. The Scripture words for it are—*ἔργον*, *work*, the most general ; *δύναμις*, *power*, which is the manifested cause ; *σημεῖον*, *sign*, which is the meaning and the use ; and *τέρας*, *wonder*, which expresses the frequent effect.

Every creaturely agent has a domain of nature assigned to him, over which he has power, according to his rank in the scale of existence. His action in this sphere manifests his personality and his character. The domain of God alone is co-extensive with the whole of nature. As furnishing the field of action for creatures, He is Himself hid. His works are seen, not Himself. He is behind the veil of nature ; but when He works among creatures openly on the field of nature, He reveals His personality. The veil is drawn aside and He

appears, which is true *revelation*. Thus a miracle is the synthesis of omnipotence and open personality.

It hence appears, that miracles are not correctly distinguished from human works, when they are called "violations of the laws of nature." If a miracle does violate a law of nature, so does every human action which overpowers gravitation or any other force which nature has in itself. A miracle is distinguished from human works in this, that it manifests higher power. An absolute miracle is a display of omnipotence.

There is an instinct within us which prompts us to connect omnipotence with omniscience and perfect veracity, with absolute moral excellence. This instinct, the education of the Israelites as a nation during many ages tended to confirm by experience. But omniscience and perfect veracity have the highest authority for our understanding; absolute moral excellence has the highest authority for our moral nature.

Besides this we must remember that the working of miracle, being action, manifests character, and that thus it is not only confirmatory of what is spoken, but has itself an independent revealing virtue.

We must remember besides, that God, appearing as a Personal Agent on the creaturely field, is not necessarily confined to miracle. He may perform innumerable actions which reveal Him, yet which do not manifest omnipotence or even superhuman power.

The second case is that of the person who now reads the record of the original revelation.

In this case we have to institute two inquiries:—

First, what means he has of ascertaining the trustworthiness of the record, that is, of satisfying himself, that the revelation, by speech and works, human and superhuman, was actually made.

Secondly, whether the record becomes in any true sense a revelation to himself.

Under the first head, the fact which naturally strikes us at once is, that the Bible does not come to him merely as a piece of literature or ancient history, but is commended to him by an existing community as the record of its origin and the charter of its privileges.

This community—the Church—has for many ages believed and taught that the documents are records of real revelation; has formally received them into the *Canon of Scripture*.

Of the origin of this community no other credible account can be given than that which is in the documents.

This community has certain peculiar usages—the sacraments—and of their origin no other credible account exists or can be given than that which is in the documents.

With the narrative of the origin of this community the records of the miracles and the reports of the Divine speech are so inextricably intertwined, that if this element of revelation is rejected, the existence of the community is an insoluble problem.

It is an obvious remark, that a recorded miracle, as such, cannot establish the historical trustworthiness of a document, since itself rests on that trustworthiness. Yet, taken in connection with the otherwise unaccountable origin of the Church, the recorded miracle does authenticate the history.

This community has now and has formerly had many members of exalted virtue, of virtue surpassing the noblest examples that can be found elsewhere. These good men have lived and died in the belief of revelation and in the closest communion with the Bible. Their goodness is accountable only on the supposition of the reality of revelation.

Of the genuineness and authenticity of the separate books, there is evidence of the same nature, but in far greater quantity, than exists in favor of other ancient works.

The united force of these reasons constitutes a very strong presumption in favor of the truth of the records.

The second inquiry is whether the record becomes in any sense a revelation to the reader.

Here let us bear in mind what was before settled, namely, that the central object of revelation is God Himself, and that this revelation is the evidence of itself.

The reader begins, as we have said, with a strong prepossession in favor of the truth of the record, which is the effect of the considerations above set forth.

This book seems to supply him with the missing key to the

mysteries of his being. He finds the recorded facts to be of such a character, in their overpowering majesty, in their correspondence to the wants of human nature, and in their congruity with the accompanying Divine Speech, that his strong prepossession becomes earnest belief.

Again, when he reads the speech, said to have been addressd to the original prophet, or uttered by the Incarnate Word, its peculiar and indescribable character, its singular efficacy, produce the instinctive conviction that it is indeed Divine. The Word of God is *a fire, a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces*. Compared with other utterances, it is as *wheat to chaff*. It is *quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*.

As in the case of the original receiver of revelation, so here in the case of the reader of the record, the deeds and the speech confirm each other.

Thus the reader of the Bible is placed in a situation, as a receiver of revelation, not far inferior to that of the original witnessing writer.

It is not of essential importance whether he attains this position, before examining the external history of the documents, or afterwards. That external history tends to establish the truth, and the testimony of the Church leads men to read the Scriptures, which is the end. But that end is often attained by the simple, if not without guidance from the Church, at least without the aid of learning.

We have judged it unnecessary to make prominent the agreement of Scripture doctrine with the purest moral teaching to be had elsewhere, or the congruity of it with our previous conceptions of God's character. The God of the Bible far surpasses in majesty, and in power over the affections, the God of the philosopher. Many a poor soul learns for the first time from the Bible to feel that he has a conscience at all. In no sense is it correct to say that Revelation needs evidence from Natural Religion.



# The Christian Year.

BY A CLERGYMAN.

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## *The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.*

“And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well : he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.”  
—Mark vii. 37.

As our Lord had a reason for every thing which He did, although we cannot always perceive it, so doubtless there is a meaning in the variety of His treatment of the persons whom He healed. One is cured by a bare volition, another by a word, a third by a touch, a fourth by anointing with clay, and washing in the pool of Siloam. The deaf stammerer referred to in the text, was first drawn aside from the crowd, probably that he might be able to attend to Jesus, quietly and without distraction. Then, the Lord “put his fingers into his ears, and spit, and touched his tongue.” Not that we are to suppose that such means were necessary for the greater ease of the cure ; still less that they had any natural efficacy. By these actions the Lord Jesus wished to signify to the man that the source of curative power was in His own person. By looking up to heaven He testified His union with God, and taught the man from what quarter power and help did proceed, and to whom he was to give thanks. The healing of the man’s body was a means well calculated to call forth right feelings of faith and gratitude, and by the actions with which it was accompanied, such feelings would naturally be intensified and enlarged.

So, brethren, God, in healing our spiritual diseases, and in training us for good, considers our various characters and capacities, and varies the treatment accordingly. The very same means which would be powerless, nay even injurious, to one person, may prove the salvation of another. This variety of treatment gives rise, of course, to a corresponding variety of inward experiences. No one mental history tallies

exactly with another. No one should distress himself because his history has not exactly conformed to another's. There is no such thing as a standard series of states of mind, through which all must pass. In general, it would be probably found that of two persons, both of whom God had "brought out of darkness into His marvellous light," very little corresponded in the experience, excepting the state out of which, and that into which, both had been conducted. One has vividly imprinted on his memory all the circumstances of a great spiritual crisis, a stormy turning-point of his destiny. Another has been led by imperceptible degrees to sensibility and obedience. Their autobiographies would have in common only this statement, "Whereas I was blind, now I see."

God's variety of dealing with human minds may be beautifully illustrated by the prophet's words (Isa. xxviii 27—29).—"For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen. This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working."

Wise parents will in this respect imitate the conduct of gracious Fatherly Providence, will study the different characters of their children, and not subject them all to one uniform system of training and discipline. The teacher who has not been impelled by variety of disposition and ability in his pupils to a corresponding variation of method, has yet to learn the rudiments of his art. The Christian minister, made wise by experience, well knows the necessity of adapting his exposition of the truth and his enforcement of duty to the general character and individual diversities of his audience. He has continually to remember, not only the general characteristics which diversify his congregation from others, but also the particular respects wherein his hearers are diversified among themselves. They have not all received

the same intellectual training, they occupy different positions, they sustain various relations to each other and to society. New circumstances are continually arising to modify their feelings and subject them to new trials. As a skilful physician studies the constitution of each of his patients, so will a wise physician of souls ; and not think it to be more rational to use the same course of treatment for every conscience than for every corporal condition.

We are informed by the Evangelist, that after the actions before described, the Lord Jesus, "looking up to heaven, *sighed*." A most beautiful, affecting and characteristic incident, so circumstantially and graphically related, as to suggest that the account must have originally been given by one who was present, was attentively watching the scene, and received from it a vivid and lasting impression.

The sigh was probably wrung from Christ's priestly heart, not only by compassion for the individual before Him, but by looking at this individual as a representative of the innumerable and manifold sufferers belonging to the general humanity with which Christ had allied Himself, and with which He sympathized. Then would press on Him the mournful thought of the sin which was the cause of all this sorrow ; the sin and the sorrow both being the wretched work of the devil's malice, whose works He had undertaken to destroy. Would that all the sin could be removed as He was now healing this man's infirmities ! Would that the ears of all could be opened to God's word, and their tongues loosed for His praise !

"And looking up to heaven, he sighed." Our Lord saw far more deeply than we into the abyss of evil. That spectacle saddened His earthly life, and made Him "a man of sorrows." He could endure it better than we. It is, perhaps, well for us that our views of evil are so superficial, and our knowledge so bounded ; for if we could search far we should always find enough of wickedness and wretchedness to render further composure impossible in our merely human minds, enough to madden us with horror and despair.

But mercy has drawn a veil over our eyes, that we may not see all. Christ, however, did see all.

Let us not, however, prove insensible to what we may see, to what we do see, of our own sins and wretchedness, or of those of our brethren. Let the sighs of Jesus quicken us to penitence. Let us, in our measure, imitate His priestly compassion. Let us be aroused to do what we can to ameliorate the evils of humanity.

The sighs of Jesus *are precious and powerful with God*. If He accepts the sacrifice of a troubled spirit, and “despiseth not the sighing of a contrite heart, nor the desires of such as be sorrowful,” though the sacrifice and desires of sinners, much more will He regard the sacred sighs of Him, of whom he said, “Thou art my beloved Son. In thee I am well-pleased.” The prayers of Jesus were always heard; the sighs of Jesus were omnipotent—from the time when first He felt the load of human evil, to that overwhelming hour when He bowed His head and died. The sighs of Jesus had an intercessory meaning and virtue, and brought down heavenly mercy on the earth, and on His brethren. Still in His glory, these sighs are remembered; the memorial of His death is there. With such an Advocate, let us approach with courage our Father’s footstool.

The sighs of Jesus *reveal God’s disposition towards us*. So complete is His agreement and union with the Father, that He is a visible manifestation of the Invisible God. Every word, every action, every sigh, reveals the Godhead. We learn much of God in nature, we may infer much for our encouragement from His past gentle care and watchfulness over us—but in Christ we come into immediate contact with Him. “He that hath seen me,” said He, to Philip, “hath seen the Father.” Here, then, in this sigh which broke forth from the God-man, we have an indication of God’s mind towards us—of His willingness to save. The old words thus receive the most direct and forcible illustration:—“Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God; and not that he should return from his ways and live?”

The sorrow of Jesus is neither mere sentiment, nor is it the fruitless sympathy of one who would—but cannot—help. It results in the mighty creative word, *Ephphatha*, *be opened*. “And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.” Christ’s gifts are not conferred with ease. The efficacious word is spoken, not joyfully, but in a sigh. So is it with all that He bestows on sinners. It is first purchased with the price of His own suffering.

“There’s ne’er a gift His hand bestows  
But cost His heart a groan.”

And I think you will find that in this world of sorrow and sin, our great benefactors do not work deliverances mirthfully, but in sadness. It is thus that great things are done. Then when success is achieved the joy follows. “He that now goeth on his way weeping, and beareth forth good seed, shall doubtless come again with joy, and bring his sheaves with him.”

It is a consoling thought, brethren, that our sufferings are not according to God’s wish, that they are inflicted for the sake of discipline, and that He would have pleasure in removing them. It is a solemn thought, that our sin is still more contrary to His will, that, as long as we refuse to give it up, we are fighting against Him, we are cherishing that which wrung groans from Christ, which prostrated Him on the ground of Gethsemane, and then lifted Him up on the cross. Let us come to Him for deliverance from them, praying Him to remove the dulness of our perception, and our insensibility to His mercy. Ever and anon we relapse into narrowness and bondage, the avenues to our souls are obstructed, the free action of our noblest powers is impeded by fetters. We need the *Ephphatha* to be spoken over us, not once, but often. We need it now. Utter it, merciful Lord? Let us understand Thy word, and when Thou hast opened our lips, our mouth shall show forth Thy praise, and we will say to one another, “He hath done all things well. He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.”



# The Preacher's Finger-Post.

## EVERLASTING REMEMBRANCE OF THE GOOD.

"The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."—Ps. cxii. 6.

THIS may be predicated of the wicked as well as the good. The words they have spoken to deceive, seduce, defame, and the deeds they have wrought to corrupt and injure, will live for ever in the memory of those with whom they have had to do. The souls of those they have injured, will hold them up for ever in memory as objects of loathing and anathema. No man who has ever touched the soul of another will ever be forgotten. The impressions he has made are ineffaceable, his visage is photographed in immortality. But the righteous are remembered for ever; for different reasons and with different emotions. Such considerations as the following might be adduced to show the imperishable memory of the righteous.

I. IT IS SEEN IN THE FAVORS WHICH HEAVEN CONFERS UPON REMOTE POSTERITY FOR THEIR SAKE. God blesses children's children, unborn generations, for the sake of a holy ancestor. David may be selected as an example of

this. Often we find in the history of the Jewish nation, that after they had by their sins incurred the displeasure of Heaven, justice was delayed or arrested in her avenging mission for the sake of David. Thus the Almighty speaks to Solomon, whose flagrant apostasy called for justice:—"I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for *David thy father's sake*: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen." (1 Kings xi. 11—13.) Years rolled away, and Abijam is king over Judah. His sins call for vengeance. But why was the stroke delayed! Here it is:—"For David's sake did the Lord his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him." (1 Kings xv. 4.) Time passes on. Abijam is gone, and Jehoram is on the throne. His iniquities challenge the justice of the Divine government. Why at that time was not the nation crushed on account of the crimes in

which the monarch and the people revelled? Here it is:—"The Lord would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake." (2 Kings viii. 19.) Still, time passes on. Hezekiah is on the throne, Jerusalem is besieged, the danger is appalling and seems inevitable. Why was it not destroyed? Here is the exposition:—"I will defend the city to save it, for mine own sake and for my servant David's sake." Here, then, is a man, who in his day, notwithstanding some grievous criminalities, had in the main his heart right with God, made the ground of blessings to his countrymen ages after he had gone to sleep with his fathers. May not this be a striking example of an ever-operative principle in the Divine government? May it not be that God always blesses some on account of the excellences of others? For the sake of one good man, God might bless some men through all coming ages. Thus, the Eternal has the "righteous in everlasting remembrance." They exist in His mind as reasons for the display of His mercy. The truth of the text is seen—

II. IN THE GOOD WHICH THE ALMIGHTY ACCOMPLISHES BY THEIR INSTRUMENTALITY THROUGH DISTANT TIMES. God

employs good men here to do good, ages after they have gone. First: *The biography of good men He uses for the good of posterity.* The holy lives recorded in the Sacred Book are perpetual organs for usefulness. For many a century they have been doing the work of Heaven, and they will continue to do so until the end of time. Joseph, Moses, David, Peter, Paul—these are all in everlasting remembrance. And the memoirs of righteous men which abound in the religious literature of the world, continue to exert their high influence, and keep their heroes up from age to age in the minds of men. Though dead they yet speak. Secondly: *The literary productions of good men He uses for the good of posterity.* A book is a second incarnation of the man's self, a body in which he works after his flesh and blood has gone to corruption. Baxter, Bunyan, Watts, Wesley, are the representatives of untold numbers of righteous men who will continue, by their writings, to live in the memory of posterity; though dead they yet speak. The truth of the text is seen—

III. IN THE CONNECTION OF THEIR LABORS WITH THE INDESTRUCTIBLE CONSCIOUSNESS OF MEN. Their labors,

whether successful or unsuccessful, will never be forgotten by those upon whom they have been employed. The saved and the lost will remember their counsels, their reproofs, their exhortations, their sermons, their prayers, for ever and ever. They burn like quenchless stars in the firmament of every soul they have endeavored to bless. From the deepest experience of all upon whom they have acted, their works will rise to memory as regularly and resistlessly as billows from the abyss of ocean. The truth of the text is seen—

IV. IN THE BLESSINGS WHICH THE ALMIGHTY WILL IMPART TO THEM THROUGH ALL ETERNITY. They will always be the objects of Divine thought and care, and out of the fulness of His love, will He continue to supply their wants—

“While life and thought and being last,  
And immortality endure.”

The subject teaches (1) The immense value of a righteous man in society. His usefulness is as permanent as the stars. (2) The best method of achieving lasting fame. Men desire lasting fame. With some the desire is a passion. Usefulness alone can give it. He who saves one soul builds up a monument for himself that

shall stand for ever. (3) The infinite regard which God has for goodness. He endows it with immortal honor.

#### CONVERTING A SOUL.

“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”—James v. 19, 20.

FROM this verse observe two things.

#### I. A SOUL LOST BY ERROR.

“If any of you do err from the truth.” Two things are implied in this expression:—First: *A safe antecedent state.* That state is a non-erring from the truth, a harmony with the truth. What is it to be in conformity with the truth? (1) Our conceptions in harmony with its essentials. (2) Our life in harmony with its spirit. This is to be in the truth, and to be thus in the truth is to be safe. The other thing implied here is:—Secondly: *A fearful possibility.* It is implied that a soul can fall from that state, can err from that truth; can bound away from that orbit. (1) This, man *can* do because he is moral. Had he not the power to do so, he could feel

nor responsibility for his conduct. (2) Man *has* done so. Adam, David, Peter, &c. So indeed have angels that excel in strength. Many forces are at work here to drive men away from the truth,—reckless speculation, Church inconsistency, Satanic agency, worldly fascinations, &c. Another thing to observe here is—

II. A SOUL SAVED BY MAN.  
 “Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.” Three things are included in this language. First: *That it is possible for man to convert a soul.* This is most manifestly implied; when we say it is possible we mean—(1) It is possible for a converted man to do so. A soul in error cannot lead into truth. Spiritual ignorance cannot enlighten. Carnality and worldliness cannot convert to Christ. The man himself must be a converted man to convert. No other has the qualification, no other will Heaven bless. (2) A converted man can only do so by the *gracious agency of God*. His power and sufficiency for the purpose are of God. This he feels in his work, and all success he ascribes lovingly and gratefully to his Maker.

Secondly: *That the man who converts a soul accomplishes immense good.* (1) He saves “a soul from death.” What is the death of a soul? Not extinction of being, not cessation of consciousness, not the abrogation of responsibilities, but the loss of all that makes existence worth having. (2) “He hides a multitude of sins”—shall cover them over so that they shall not be seen. (1) The act causes the blotting out the iniquities of the converted. They are swept away clear from the sky of his soul. (2) The act prevents an unknown number of sins being committed. Had the soul remained in a state of error from the truth, what sins it would have committed. (3) The act brings out an agency for the destruction of sin. The converted soul sets to work to convert others. Thirdly: *That the immense good he accomplishes should be well considered by him.* “Let him know it.” “Let him know it,” to cheer him amidst the discouragements of his labors, and to inspire him with persevering zeal. “Let him know it,” in order that he may adore his all-merciful Creator, in employing him in a mission so transcendently glorious and beneficent.

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## ANGELIC SINNERS.

"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgement."—2 Peter ii. 4.

HUMAN sinners surround us. We are with them—we are of them. Our acquaintance with them is a terrible reality. Of angelic sinners we know nothing but what is revealed in the Holy Word, and in that Word we have a great deal concerning them; and the information is undoubtedly designed for our study, and our profit. We may mention a few of the things which we learn from the Divine Record concerning them. We learn—

I. That they are the most ANCIENT sinners. They were the first transgressors of Heaven's eternal law. They sinned before man was created, and when his home perhaps lay in chaos. They were the *first* to break the moral harmony of the universe. Being the first sinners, two things strike our attention concerning them. First: *The uniqueness of their circumstances.* They had no tempter. Adam had; so has his race ever since; so have we. But all the circumstances that surrounded them flowed in a mighty tide in favor of

virtue. They had no depraved propensities. All the descendants of Adam have, which account for their sinful conduct. All their propensities were in favor of holiness. The other thing that strikes our attention concerning them is — Secondly: *The force of their freedom.* Having neither an outward tempter nor an inward propensity to wrong, they must have risen up against all the external circumstances, and internal tendencies of their being. We learn—

II. That they are the most INFLUENTIAL sinners. First: *They were the original introducers of sin to this world.* They have a mighty leader, spoken of as the "Devil," "Satan," "Prince of this world," "the God of this world," "the Prince of the power of the air." He it was that appeared to our first parents in pristine innocency, and turned them from the true, the righteous and Divine. Secondly: *They are the constant promoters of sin in this world.* The principalities and powers of darkness under the direction of their tremendous leader, have been for six thousand years unremittingly engaged in promoting wickedness amongst men. They have a kingdom here, and the vast populations



of the world have been, since the fall, and still are, their loyal subjects. They are terribly powerful. One of them has power to lead the world captive at his will. They can tempt men, men cannot tempt them. We learn—

III. That they are the most INCORRIGIBLE sinners. Instances of man's conversion from sin are numerous, and ever multiplying. The greatest of human sinners have been changed—Manasseh, Mary Magdalene, Saul of Tarsus, &c.; but we have no record of the conversion of one fallen angel; their character seems stereotyped. From age to age, century to century, millenium to millenium, they continue rebels against God, opponents to holiness, and enemies to the creation. Their incorrigibility shows two things. First: *That intellectual knowledge cannot convert.* They have intellects of vast capacity, they commenced their education under the immediate radiance of the Divine throne. They have studied God and His universe, both as innocent and as sinful beings. Their knowledge must be immense, yet they are unconverted. Ah! knowledge, alas, is all in vain. Do not dream of our little science and philosophy

ever converting men. Their incorrigibility shows:—Secondly: *That an experience of the evil of sin cannot convert.* There are some who say that men will get their moral evils one day corrected, as physical evils are corrected, by the experience of the evils of their mistakes. Angels have had experience of the evils of sin. They know what the wrath of God is, what hell is. They have felt it through many a rolling age, yet they are unreformed, more obdurate now perhaps than ever. Misery, like law and terrors, does but harm. We learn—

IV. That they are the most MISERABLE of sinners. There are three things which indicate something of the extent of their misery—First: *Contrast between their present and past condition.* Our condition to-day, happy or otherwise, is greatly controlled by its felt relation to the past. The humble cot, furnished with the mere necessities and common comforts of life, would make the homeless pauper happy, but the born lord of a mansion miserable; and that on account of the felt contrast between the past and the present. The original condition of angels was transcendently glorious and blessed—they were the morning stars of creation, the elder-born of

God. But what now? They are reserved "in chains of darkness"—they are in "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Another thing which indicates something of the extent of their misery is—Secondly: *The vastness of their capacity.* The misery of a spiritual being greatly depends upon his capability of thought. Men, in similar conditions, do not suffer equally. He who is able to take the widest view of the causes, relations, and bearings of his position, will feel the most. Angels have a capacity far greater than men to understand the origin, bearings, and issues of their crimes. Another thing still, which indicates something of the extent of their misery is—Thirdly: *The utter hopelessness of their state.* There is hope for human sinners in this world; there is a Saviour provided for them; there is a heaven that is offered to them. There seems no hope for fallen angels. Christ took not on Him the nature of angels; He took on Him the seed of Abraham.

Such are some of the thoughts which the Bible suggests to us concerning angelic sinners. And are not such thoughts suited, as undoubtedly they are designed, to rouse us human sinners to

spiritual earnestness in the cause of our salvation?

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#### A FATHER'S THOUGHT OVER HIS CHILD'S GRAVE.

"I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."—2 Sam. xii. 23.

THE context shows David in two aspects. First: *Suffering as a sinner.* He had committed a great sin, and the loss of his child was a retribution. Secondly: *Reasoning as a saint.* "And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." The text implies David's belief in three things.

I. THE UNRETURNABLENESS OF THE DEAD. "He shall not return to me." He felt that all grief was useless, all prayer was unavailing. The dead return not again. "When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return." "I shall behold man no more in the land of the living," said Hezekiah. First: *There is no returning to discharge neglected duties.* Duties which we have neglected in relation to our children, our servants,

ourneighbours, our country, we can never return after to discharge. They remain undone. "There is no work, knowledge, or device in the grave," &c. Secondly: *There is no returning to recover lost opportunities.* Lost Sabbaths, lost sermons, lost means of grace, no one comes back from the grave to redeem. If there is no return to the earth—(1) How foolish it is to set our hearts upon it. (2) How important to finish its work as we go on. The text implies David's belief—

II. IN THE CERTAINTY OF HIS OWN DISSOLUTION. "I shall go to him." He had no doubt on the subject, nor has anyone any reason to doubt. "It is appointed unto all men once to die." "One generation cometh, and another passeth away." "We must all die, and be as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again." First: *The certainty of death is universally admitted with the understanding.* There is no room left for questioning it. Death reigned from Adam to Moses, from Moses to Christ, from Christ to this hour. Secondly: *The certainty of death is universally denied by the life.* All men live as if they were immortal. How morally infatuated is our race! The text implies David's belief—

III. IN THE RE-UNION AFTER DEATH. "I shall go to him." First: *The re-union he believed in was spiritual.* It evidently means more than going to his grave, and the mingling of their dust together. There would be no consolation in this. Secondly: *The re-union he believed in was conscious.* They would feel themselves together, recognize each other as child and father. The doctrine of a recognition of spirits in a future world, may be argued by the laws of mental association, the benevolence of God, and the allusions of Scripture. Thirdly: *The re-union he believed in was happy.* There would be no consolation in the idea of an unhappy union. (1) He believed that his child was happy. Infants go to heaven. "Of such," says Christ, "is the kingdom of heaven." The men who deny this, have dehumanized their nature by a barbarous theology. (2) He believed that he was safe. He felt that he should go to him, be with him in that happy world.

Let these thoughts of death aid us to fulfil the mission of life.

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## CHRISTIAN DIGNITY.

"Thou shalt increase my greatness."—Ps. lxxi. 21.

THE world has its great men; so has the Bible. When we put them alongside each other the comparison often deepens into the contrast. Alongside the monarch, the Bible puts the man who rules his own spirit well; the warrior, one who fights the fight of faith; the artist, one who by loving deeds paints his own portrait on the canvas of the soul of the suffering. A good man is a great man, but a bad man is not great though he sits upon a throne.

I. This greatness is REAL. Consider what God calls the good man—a saint, a son, a joint heir with Christ. Who are his bosom friends? The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. What has he on his side? God, and truth, and Christ, a purifying faith, an approving conscience, glorious hopes, and angel sympathies. This honor hath all the saints. With many in this vain world, "the rank is but the guinea's stamp," but here, there is not only heaven's stamp, but heaven's gold!

II. This greatness is CONSCIOUS. God has spoken; I have heard. He has given; I have received. He visited the land I lived in, and did

not pass *my* door. In his mighty life-boat He touched at the shore where I stood, gave me a hail and welcomed me on board! These are the glad testimonies of the renewed one: "I know in whom I have believed," &c.

III. This greatness is DERIVED. Once I had it not. Peace did not fold her gentle wing and nestle in my bosom, the joy of the Lord was not my strength. I was alienated from the life of God. The remembrance of this shall ever keep me humble. "Not unto us," &c. But though I once possessed them *not*, now I do. "Being justified by faith I have peace." "I joy in God, by whom I have received the atonement."

IV. This greatness is INCREASING. David was an old man, yet he could say soberly and acceptably, "Thou shalt increase my greatness." First: *In my personal enjoyment.* Religion is not a surface thing, it is a thing of the heart—living, growing, expanding, blooming, fruit-bearing; not a stagnant pool, but a living stream. Infirmities shall lessen, virtues shall increase, thy love shall be more precious, thy presence more valued. "Thou wilt not forsake the work of thine own hands." Secondly: *In*

*the experience of the saints.* Perhaps it was given the Psalmist in a flush of holy inspiration to see, as he swept the plains of coming generations, that his experience would not be lost upon those who in the strife were fighting for the right and the true. Is not this even expressed in verse 18, "Until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power unto every one that is to come." David's name is great to-day! And in every well-worn Bible may be seen the signs of his sympathy and power. Thirdly: *In the admiration of angels.* What sympathizing, appreciating, ministering spectators are these!

H. T. M.

Liverpool.

#### JEHOVAH OUR HOME.

"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place."—Ps. xc. 1.

THIS psalm sets forth the eternity of God and the frailty of man. Mourning the ills that contract and the evils that embitter this short span of existence, it turns man's *thoughts* to that power which can establish, and his hopes to that "mercy" which can "satisfy," and crown with fadeless "beauty," (see v. 17.) *Observe the solemnity and force of the language of verses 1—3.* "Lord, thou hast been our

dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, return, ye children of men." Inspiration stretches language into the misty eternity on either side, and reveals GOD existing ere ever a world was formed, and unchanged by circling years; when the "mountains" depart and the hills remove. If the "mountains," the emblems of constancy, mock man's littleness as they stand, broad-based and solemn, from century to century; how painfully evident that littleness becomes when man has to do with HIM, in whose sight a "thousand years are as a yesterday;" how dream-like the brief, dwarfed being; how priceless a refuge from the "flood" that "carries them away;" how blest is he whose spirit leans on this truth:—"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations!" The words suggest:—

I. MAN NEEDS A HOME.—A refuge beyond the reach of vicissitude. (1) We crave *immortality*, and our longings are never satisfied, our questions never answered, till our hopes



take hold of the Infinite. Like the climbing plant, without the strong stem to support it, the sensibilities of our frail but wonderful nature, trail in the dust. Without repose in God, there may be the butterfly's gaiety while summer sunbeams last, but the worm is shelterless when the blast of adversity beats.

(2) Some are anxious to establish man's *orphanage*; the child of no promise; the homeless heir of nothing. The unblest joylessness of such spirits indicates the "divinity that stirs within us." (3) Many say, "our Father" with the lip, but know nothing of the "many mansions," the children's home; how can they know anything of home who believe in a *heartless* God?

II. GOD REVEALS HIMSELF AS HUMANITY'S HOME. "Our dwelling place." Though sin's leprous spot taints the wall of our most sacred chamber, yet it has not razed the foundations of *home*. We know something of the joys of its kindly shelter, when the ice blasts of a cold world bear upon us. But we *cannot* build for ourselves a *perfect home*. In God this home is *provided*, elaborately finished for the tenant man: he is invited to occupy it in perpetuity—"all things are now ready." God is a *perfect* home

for the spirit; *perfect*, where nature, worn and weary with the world's incessant friction can relax itself; where every want can be met with God's unfailing supply. *Perfect*, for under the grand sunlight of prosperity's sky, nature and grace congratulate us when we exult in God. *Perfect*, for the darkest midnight that trouble can frown is arched by some bow of promise.

"Sorrow touched by thee grows bright  
With more than rapture's ray;  
As darkness shows us worlds of light  
We never saw by day."

The perfection of our home in God is seen in three particulars. First: *Physical adaptation*. This world is fitted up for man's accommodation; fitted to engage energy and repay toil. It is not for the idler's comfort: he is the devil's apprentice and clumsily endeavors to kill time. "Dress it and keep it" are the terms of the original grant. So used, there is bread and work for all. Men talk of the "curse of labor;" we don't believe in it; labor is one of our blessings; designed to keep us warm with healthful exercise under our chill moral skies. It is not the "thorns and briars," but,

"Man's inhumanity to man,  
Makes countless thousands mourn."

Secondly: *Intellect finds a home in God*. Never talk of religious dulness, while the

fields of a universe, teeming with "grand thoughts grandly expressed," are not only largely *unexplored*, but in their boundless infinitude almost unknown. Our intellectual nature, with its ever-widening range of vision, may expatiate for ever in these fields of thought. All are the "precious thoughts" of God. Christianity represses no reverent curiosity. Its license is wide as the range of virtue, and interminable as existence. "Prove all things." "Whatsoever things are true," &c. "Think on these things." Our Father spreads out for the education of His children the grandly-illustrated page of nature, and the letter of His love. Christianity is the nurse of free thought. Thirdly: *Heart and soul—our moral being—find a home in God.* "In all generations." Religion, under every different form, and with every varied accompaniment: Patriarchal simplicity, Mosaic picture, Christian manhood—have ever been the same, ever fitted to man's heart. With tones of tenderness, it has ever substantially said, "I will give you rest." Believers of every past age, guided by the stars of promise, have passed within the vail, leaving their testimony; and each succeeding generation has been able gratefully to cele-

brate it—"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place," &c. *Every believer is going home.*

III. OUR HOME IN GOD IS INVIOLEABLE—IT IS PERFECTLY SECURE. This cannot be predicated of any earthly home. "He buildstoolow, that builds beneath the skies." Fortune's wheel is sure to revolve and bring widowhood to many. Uncertainty is the wormwood that embitters the joys of earth. But God knows every contingency, calculates the result of every event. His wisdom, power, love, &c., guarantee the inviolability of our home. Out of God, there is no resting-place for the jaded spirits of men; no arbor on the difficult hills of life; no home proof against the spoiler; or so barred that the ruthless hand of death will not tear the tenant from its shelter. But there is a "land of Beulah," "a house not made with hands," &c.

IV. GOD OUR HOME: THEN IT IS ETERNAL. "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." An eternal home! Here culminate our loftiest aspirations, our highest hopes. Give man the good his nature is *fitted* to enjoy; *secure* its possession to him *for ever*, and he finds that a perpetuity of bliss is bliss indeed. He has attained

"glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life." Man has no lease of aught he values here below; the grant by which he enjoys is *not renewable for ever*. Every moment relaxes his grasp of earth's joys. Everything here below that makes life desirable, fades; no spring revives the wasted forms of sere and faded pleasures. But rise up and look through the glass of this text, and "pleasures for evermore" are discoverable; for "thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations," and "to everlasting, thou art God."

V. THIS HOME IS TO BE REACHED THROUGH CHRIST. "I am the door." Even on earth, a man can enter the avenue to his Father's house, the strait gate leading to immortal honors. In *Him*, "the whole building is fitly

framed," &c. Built on Him, the rains may descend, the floods come, the wind blow, and yet the house falls not. In calm confidence of eternal security the believer says, "Return, O God, our shield." *Christ is the door*. Miss it, and the spirit is a homeless exile; a shelterless outcast on the plains of undone despair. The door of hope is for ever barred. Dream not of the joys of *home* out of Christ; and say not in your heart, "I cannot reach this distant home;" it is the seducer's whisper; stop your ears and cry "eternal life," *home, home, sweet home!* Every man may say, and ought to say, "I will arise and go to my Father." A home and welcome awaits every returning prodigal.

*Christian!* as the world reads your *creed* in your *tones* and life, let it see that you are *going home*. W. C. B.

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## The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

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### HEATHEN THOUGHTS ON PRAYER.

O souls bowed earthward, and void of heavenly thoughts! what avails it to bring to the temples these worldly principles of ours, and to estimate what the gods think good after our own depraved nature? . . . Why do we not offer to the powers above, what the high-born cannot give from his great dish—duty to God and man harmonized in the soul, heart of

hearts all holy, and a breast imbued with generous honor. If only I bring these to the sanctuary, I shall please Heaven with my mite of salted meal.—PERSIUS *Sat. ii.*, 61, *f.*

Is there nothing, then, for men to pray for? If you wish my advice, you will let the gods give of themselves, what is expedient for us and is suited to our fortunes. For the gods will send what is best for us, rather than what is pleasant.

Man is dearer to them than to himself. We, from impulse of passion and blind overpowering desire, pray for this and that; but the gods know what our prayers would turn out for us. If we must pray, if we must offer sacrifices, pray for a sound mind in a sound body; ask for a brave heart, free from fear of death, to reckon the end of life among the functions of nature; a heart able to endure any labors whatever; a heart that knows not passion or desire, and holds the toils of Hercules and cruel labors preferable to adultery, gluttony, and effeminacy."—JUVENAL, *Sat. x.*, 346—363.

And he (Socrates) prayed also to the gods simply to give him what was good, on the ground that the gods know best what kind of things are good. And he alway thought that those who prayed for gold, or silver, or power, or anything of this sort, might as well pray for dice-play, or a battle, or anything else

of which the result is uncertain. And making small offerings from small means, he thought he stood on a level with those who made many and great offerings from great means. For, he said, that, as one thing, it was not well for the gods, if they took more pleasure in great than in small offerings, for in that case the offerings of bad men would often give them more pleasure than the offerings of the good; and again, it would not be worth while for men to live, if the offerings of the bad were more pleasing to the gods than those of the good. But he ever thought that the gods took most delight in honors paid them by the pious. And he approved this line—

"As you have ability, do offerings to the immortals."

Just as in conduct to our friends and guests, and in all one's life, "Do your best," was good advice.—XENOPHON, *Memorab.*, Bk. i., ch. 3, J. 3.

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## Theological Notes and Queries.

### OPEN COUNCIL.

[The utmost freedom of honest thought is permitted in this department. The reader must therefore use his own discriminating faculties, and the Editor must be allowed to claim freedom from responsibility.]

#### SATAN AND SIN.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 1, p. 52. Satan and sin are not inseparable, in the sense that wherever there is sin, Satan must have caused it. Much sin is caused by the promptings of our own corruption, irregular instincts, and the like; and by the temptations of the world.

#### ANCIENT PREACHING.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 2, p. 52. Noah was "a

preacher of righteousness." (2 Peter ii. 5.) Ezra, standing on a pulpit or platform, expounded the law. (Neh. viii. 4—8.) Under the old economy, generally, the priests were expounders of the law, and the instructors of the people. (Mal. ii. 7.) The prophets were qualified and commissioned by God to speak in His name. Their prophesying corresponded to our preaching, with the exception that they were inspired, whereas our preachers often propagate error.

The prophet's business was not mere prediction of the future. He was God's mouth to the people; reproving sin, recalling them to allegiance, often declaring the most spiritual truths, and predicting the future Messiah and the glories of the Church.

WINNING REFINED SCEPTICISM.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 3, p. 52. They cannot be won

by Calvinian preaching, but are rather confirmed in opposition to Christianity. Perhaps one good method might be to nail to our pulpit doors wherever truth is not preached, until some one could be got to preach it. The truth of Christ, the standard doctrine of all ages of the Church, is "the power of God unto salvation" for all classes, for the Greek as well as the barbarian.

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## Literary Notices.

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[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

### THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,  
Since none can compass more than they intend.

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CHAMBERS'S ENCYCLOPÆDIA. A Dictionary of Universal Knowledge for the People. Illustrated with Maps and numerous Wood Engravings. Vol. VI. London: W. & R. Chambers.

WE are glad to receive the sixth volume of this magnificent work. Alphabetically it carries us on from L A B to N U M. If the alphabet decides the length of the undertaking, it is half-way to the terminus. Its path hitherto has been through scenes rich in every department of science, literature, and art. Every step has given a revelation of something worth knowing. The amount of information compressed into the articles is truly amazing. There are volumes in a page, yet there is no confusion; there is clearness with condensation. The judgment we have passed upon the preceding volumes apply to this, and our recommendation is as hearty as ever. The work, when completed, will be a library in itself; such a library as comes within the reach of almost the poorest man that craves for knowledge.

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THE ILLUSTRATED POCKET CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY COMMENTARY ON THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT. Part I. to XII. By the REVS. ROBERT JAIMESON, D.D., St. Paul's, Glasgow; A. R. FAUSSET, A.M., St. Cuthbert's, York; and REV. PROFESSOR DAVID BROWN, D.D., Aberdeen. London: William Wesley.

THESE numbers complete this work. A work, "the object of which," we are informed, "has been to produce a Commentary embodying the



ripest results of modern criticism, and conveying the sense in a popular style, so full as to be of practical value to the Bible student, and compressed within such limits so as to bring it within the reach of all. The New Testament portion of the work is prepared with continual reference to the 'Critical Greek Testaments' of Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles; and to the 'Critical Commentaries' of Bengel, de Wette, Meyer, Olshausen, Stier, Luthardt, Alford, Webster and Wilkinson, Philippi, &c. Similar sources, including the most recent British and foreign commentators, are consulted on the Old Testament." For Sabbath School teachers, city missionaries, itinerant preachers, this work will be found of special service. Though scholarly, it is popular. It gives us the results, rather than the processes of learning, and its pages are not overlaid with Greek and Hebrew type. The work has our hearty approval, and we trust that its circulation will be equal to its merits.

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SERMONS ON BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SUBJECTS. By the REV. THOMAS ALLEN, Author of "Discourses on Atheism. London: Jackson, Walford & Hodder.

THE Author of these sermons has long been a distinguished ornament of that influential and growing body of Christians known as "New Connection" Methodists. Though a man of his type ought to be known by Christendom, we fear that his name has not travelled far beyond the precincts of his own denomination. He is a thinker of no ordinary mould, dealing with the roots of things. To such, fame seldom comes at once, but it does come at last, and when it comes it spreads with the advancing intelligence of mankind, and flourishes for centuries over the graves of reputations won by superficial men. This volume contains thirteen discourses on important religious subjects, and they are fraught as might be expected from such an author with thoughts of unusual value and force.

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PASTORAL COUNSELS. By REV. J. C. BOYCE, M.A. London: William Macintosh.

"THE following pages," says the author, "owe their existence under the Great Disposer of all things, in the first instance, to a want felt by the author, in the course of his own ministrations to the sick and suffering, of a hand-book, that in cases of lingering illness, might enable him to impart some little variety to them on each successive visit. He felt anxious to turn to the best possible advantage, a season that, with very many, is the great turning-point of their lives—a season when the infinite realities of the eternal world are impressed with greater force and persistence upon the heart and the conscience; because in those 'still hours' prospects commonly open out before the sufferer, that stretch away into immensity, beyond this little islet of human life." This volume contains

forty-nine short addresses, adapted almost to every conceivable case of persons, and to each there is appended a short prayer. The design of the work is excellent, and its execution is admirable; it meets a necessity, and will be hailed, no doubt, by thousands of the benevolent and devout, who visit the sick and the dying. It will give a word in season to such.

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THOUGHTS ON PREACHING; being Contributions of Homiletics. By JAMES W. ALEXANDER, D.D. London: Hamilton, Adams & Co.

WE are informed that "it had long been the cherished wish of Dr. Alexander, to prepare a volume on Homiletics for the use of young ministers and students, and with this object in view, he was in the habit of jotting down in his private journals, in the form of paragraphs, such thoughts as occurred to him on the subject. In one of his later journals the following entry is found: 'If the Lord spare me below, it will be well for me some day to look over all my dailies, and collect what I have written from time to time on ministerial work. It is already enough for a volume. It might do good when I am gone.'" He is gone, and death has defeated his plans. One has arisen however, who has done what he intended, and we have in this volume the experiences and suggestions of one of the most distinguished scholars, and eminent ministers of the age, touching Homiletic work. Most preachers may derive great profit from the contents of this volume.

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SUNSHINE AND SHADOWS; or, SKETCHES OF THOUGHT, PHILOSOPHIC AND RELIGIOUS. By WILLIAM BENTON CLULOW. London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Co.

THIS is a remarkable book, and much to our liking. It contains thoughts on a vast variety of subjects—and those thoughts which could only flow from the highest class of cultured intellect. Every page is a mine—not of brass or iron—but of gold. We have heard that the author was once a professor in some Nonconformist College. Why he is not so now, we know not, unless it be that the committee of that college preferred educated inanity to cultured power. The chairs in some of our theological colleges are built for creedal pedants, rather than for Christian philosophers. We hope to enrich our pages occasionally with extracts from this remarkable book.

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WHOLESOME WORDS. Selected and revised by J. E. RYLAND, M.A. London: Jackson, Walford, & Hodder.

WHEN we say that this volume contains the choicest words from Taylor, Adams, Sibbes, and Leighton, our readers will accept the title as a truthful one. The editor would do well to go on, and make selections, equally judicious, from the productions of other great authors of past centuries.



# A HOMILY

ON

## Christ's Detachment from Sinners.

"Separate from sinners."—Heb. vii. 26.

**T**HE expression "separate from sinners," seems intended as an explanation of the three phrases preceding it—"holy, harmless, undefiled;" these phrases being selected by the apostle to express his conception of the perfect purity of Christ's character. I shall look at Christ's moral detachment from sinners *as a deep feeling in the mind of His contemporaries; as an undoubted fact realized by Himself; and as an essential power in His redemptive undertaking.*

I shall look at His detachment from sinners—

I. AS A DEEP FEELING in the mind of His contemporaries. He enters a synagogue at Nazareth, His native place. All there knew His humble pedigree, and regarded Him as one of their peasant townsmen; but there was such a moral originality of goodness about Him, that after He had closed the book He read from, "the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him." (Luke iv. 14—27.) A Roman centurion—"a man under authority"—felt the same awe in the presence of Jesus; felt that between him and the Peasant there was a distance that made him humble, and he said, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof." (Matt. viii. 5—13.) Those who sold and bought in the temple felt this; and, struck with terror, they hurried off. (Matt. xxi. 12.) The scribes and Pharisees

who accused the woman taken in adultery, could not stand before the unearthly purity of Christ's character, and they "went out one by one." (John viii. 1—11.) The Roman ruffians who came in the garden of Gethsemane to take Him by force felt it, and they fell as dead men before Him. Pilate felt it, struggled against it, but it overwhelmed him at last. The spectators of the crucifixion felt it. Luke tells us that "all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned."

If the people, generally, including His enemies, were thus impressed with the mysterious moral distance which separated Him from them all, it is natural to suppose that His disciples, whose sensibilities had been quickened, would feel it too. Hence we hear Peter exclaim, "Depart from me ; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." In truth, wherever He appeared, there seemed to be a feeling that although He was with them, amongst them, He was not of them—that morally He lived in a world of His own, moved in an orbit linked to an unearthly centre, and lighted by unearthly rays. Now this feeling of distance which they had in relation to Him, cannot be accounted for on either of the three following grounds.

First: It cannot be accounted for on the ground of *miraculous manifestations*. He wrought miracles, it is true, numerous and stupendous ; but the people do not seem to have been terrified by these. These, as a rule, appeared attractive—drew men to Him. They followed Him for their sake. Moses and Elijah, too, wrought miracles ; yet their contemporaries had not a similar feeling of separateness.

Secondly: It cannot be accounted for on the ground of *His social superiority*. The feeling of the people towards Christ was nothing like that which the humbler classes experience in relation to those who occupy elevated positions in society. It was not that kind of distance at all. Such distance as that did not exist between Christ and His contemporaries. He was low in social rank. He was in a social sense one with the people.

Thirdly: It cannot be accounted for on the ground of *His non-sociality*. He did not shut Himself up in His own individuality, and stand aloof from His species with cold indifference. He was genial; His social proclivities were strong and active; He mingled with the people; He joined them in their worship and in their work; He accompanied them on their journies; He sailed with them in their boats; He sat down with them at the festivities of the table.

No! His detachment from them, which they felt, was of another kind altogether. It was purely moral. His incorruptible truthfulness, His exquisite sensibilities, His calm reverence, His overflowing benevolence, His unconquerable love of eternal right, invested Him with that God-like air and bearing which made them feel that He stood at an unapproachable moral distance. Between Him and them, in a moral sense, there was nothing in common. Their reasoning could not touch His judgment. The heroes they worshipped, the conventionalities they respected, the pleasures they revelled in, were all contemptible to Him. The Prince of the World—one who embodied the leading thoughts, passions, and purposes of a corrupt world—came to Jesus, and could find nothing in Him; nothing in common; and, therefore, no fulcrum for his infernal lever.

I shall look at this detachment from sinners—

II. As an UNDOUBTED FACT realized by Himself. The feeling which the people had of His distance from them, was not a fanatical impression; it was founded upon fact—a fact that *Christ* Himself deeply realized. Christ felt Himself alone—alone in the teeming cities and the thronged assemblies. A mysterious solitariness rested upon Him wherever He went. He understood all, read them through and through; but none understood Him. Thoughts, and loves, and plans were in Him as His very life and spring of action, with which He found none to sympathize. “He came to his own, his own received him not.”

Christ's realization of this fact is seen—



First: *In His frequent personal withdrawal from men in order to hold fellowship with His Father.* His mind was heavy, and by the law of His human nature He craved for some sympathetic spirit to whom to unburden Himself. There was none amongst men. He goes to the Infinite Father. Frequently we read of Him being alone with the Father. Perhaps the burden of His cry to the Everlasting One was this: "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee."

His realization of this fact is seen—

Secondly: *In much of the language He addressed to men.* Thus, when on one occasion, as He was surrounded by a crowd, He was told that His mother and His brethren had come desiring to see Him, His reply was, "My mother and my brethren are those which hear the word of God and do it." Language this, which, if it means anything, means that He felt Himself standing at a moral distance from His nearest relations. Thus, too, we often hear Him speak as if the whole of His mind was in a region far remote from the spheres of human activity. "Ye are from beneath," He says, "I am from above." And again: "I and my Father are one." Yes, He felt His detachment from the race He loved, the men amongst whom He lived, the world He came to save.

I shall look at this detachment from sinners—

III. As an ESSENTIAL POWER in His redemptive undertaking. The Divine holiness of character which thus detached Him from the men amongst whom He lived, and sinners of all times and lands, was just that power which qualified Him to be a Redeemer of the race.

First: *It was just that power which rendered His services as a Redeemer acceptable to God.* We may lay it down as a moral axiom, that efforts put forth to serve man, unless they are acceptable to God, will be of no real and lasting service. The apostle tells us in the context that it was this holiness of character that gave a Divine value to His sacrificial service. "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless,

undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore." His sacrifice would not have been accepted as an atonement for our transgressions had He not been "separate from sinners."

Secondly: *It was just that power that rendered His services as a Redeemer efficacious to man.* The sublime holiness of His life is that power that is to convict, renovate, sanctify, and save men. Had there been any moral imperfection in Him, He would have had no power to quicken souls into the life of virtue and God. A man who is one with sinners can never save them; he must be detached, he must keep within an orbit of heavenly purity and truth. Terrible is the mistake which the modern Church and many of its ministers are making in their endeavours to effect the spiritual reformation of mankind. By approximating as closely as possible to the sinful world, by making concessions to popular prejudices, tastes, pursuits, and pleasures, churches are endeavoring to convert men. They will tolerate worldliness in their members, and the clap-trap of business and the slang of streets in their pulpit. All this, in order to come into a nearer proximity to the world for the purpose of converting it. This is an inversion of the true order. The power of the Church to convert is in a felt moral detachment from the world. Hence the command, "Come out from among them and be ye separate, touch not the unclean thing, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." He who in spirit and character is most remote from sinners, who walks with God, and impresses sinners around him with their feeling of distance from him, is the man who sends the most renovating and saving influences into his age.

Brothers, the subject gives us a *reason for thankfulness*. How profound and practical should be our gratitude to God

for such a life as Christ's. The grandest fact in the history of this planet is, that One has been here wearing our humanity, and in that humanity living out the perfections of God. He brought the ideas, the spirit, the inspirations of the upper heavens down to this earth; and though He has gone, they are still here—here in this Blessed Book, here in many a holy life—and their existence here is the only hope of the world. The moral world is different since He has been here. The heavens, I think, are a little brighter; the air is more salubrious; and life, I am sure, has more significance. The subject, too, furnishes a motive for *self-examination*. How are we living? Are we living out the life of Christ—living a life of sublime separateness from the world? If not, we are none of His; for “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” If not, do not expect to convert men. All your grand plans to improve the world are but mere castles in the air; and all the forces you exert are mechanical, not vital. They merely rattle in machinery; they neither multiply nor bless the life of the world. Your prayers are but jargon, and your religious discourses but “sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.” Without holiness no man shall see the Lord—no man can serve the Lord.

“Try us, O Lord, and search the ground  
Of our too sinful heart;  
Whate'er of guile in us is found,  
Oh, bid it all depart.  
When to the right or left we stray, .  
Ne'er may Thy warnings cease;  
Still guide us in th' eternal way,  
Thé way of perfect peace.”



# A Homiletic Glance at the Acts of the Apostles.

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Able expositions of the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, describing the manners, customs, and localities described by the inspired writers ; also interpreting their words, and harmonizing their formal discrepancies, are, happily, not wanting amongst us. But the eduction of its widest truths and highest suggestions is still a felt desideratum. To some attempt at the work we devote these pages. We gratefully avail ourselves of all exegetical helps within our reach ; but to occupy our limited space with any lengthened archæological, geographical, or philological remarks, would be to miss our aim ; which is not to make bare the mechanical process of the study of Scripture, but to reveal its spiritual results.

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## SECTION THIRTEENTH.—Acts v. 12—16.

“And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people ; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them : but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits : and they were healed every one.”—Acts v. 12—16.

SUBJECT :—*Phases of the Young Church.*

THE case of Ananias and Sapphira detailed in the first eleven verses we have elsewhere noticed.\* The grand subject which that narrative brings out with the force of a tremendous miracle, is the *enormity of religious pretensions*. The verses before us present the young Church in two aspects, as an organ of restorative power, and as an institution differently affecting different men.

I. AS AN ORGAN OF RESTORATIVE POWER. We are told in

\* See “Homilist,” Vol. IV., New Series, p. 205.

the twelfth verse that "by the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were wrought among the people." And in the sixteenth verse *the restorative character* of all their works is distinctly stated: "*And they were healed every one.*" It is true that the works here recorded by the apostles were miraculous and material, but they may be fairly regarded as specimens and symbols of those spiritual works which the true Church has ever been, and still is, constantly performing for the moral restoration of mankind.

Two remarks are suggested concerning this restoration—

First: *It was manifestly Divine.* The "many signs and wonders" which the apostles wrought among the people were beyond all controversy Divine, and were felt by those who were the subjects and spectators to be so. So little did the people regard them as the effects of the natural power of the apostles, that they seemed to consider that the very *shadow of Peter* would be enough to accomplish them. "They brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and on couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing might overshadow some of them." Luke does not say that any were healed by Peter's shadow, he merely states what was in the mind of the people on the subject. There was no doubt anywhere as to the Divinity of the works. The moral power in the Church to restore souls is also incontrovertibly Divine. No man, however exalted his piety, extensive his attainments, brilliant his talents, mighty his logic, and overwhelming his eloquence, can restore the lost soul. The power for it is the power of God.

Another remark suggested concerning this restorative work is—

Secondly: *It was abundantly adequate.* Great were the crowds of the diseased and afflicted of both sexes, and of all ages, which were brought to "Solomon's porch, and into the streets," on this occasion. The multitudes who were brought out of the "cities round about unto Jerusalem" were in different circumstances and afflicted with different diseases. Some were even "vexed with unclean spirits," but the healing



power was equal to all, met each case of the hundreds and the thousands, "And they were healed every one." So it is with the morally healing power in the Church. It is equal to every case, it is a balm for every wound.

The other aspect which the verses present to the young Church is—

II. AS AN INSTITUTION DIFFERENTLY AFFECTING DIFFERENT MEN. The Church which met there "with one accord in Solomon's porch," was an institution effecting very different results in the population around.

First: *In some it produced a revulsion.* "And of the rest durst no man join himself to them." By the "rest" here I understand, not the rest of the disciples, but the rest of that class of rich men to whom Ananias had belonged. The rich men of the world were so alarmed at the judgment that had come down upon Ananias and Sapphira, members of their class, that they recoiled with terror, and dared not unite themselves to the fellowship of the disciples. A Church whose discipline is so severely pure, which will not tolerate untruthfulness, dishonesty, or selfishness in any form, is sure to keep aloof the multitudes of the carnal, the mercenary, and the false. Would that the discipline of the Church were now of that exalted character, which would draw a broad line of demarcation between her and the ungodly world.

Secondly: *In some it awakened admiration.* "But the people magnified them." The multitudes, the general body of the people, felt a high respect and admiration for a community where such purity was displayed, as that which appeared in the doom which befel Ananias and Sapphira. Incorruptible sincerity, and high spiritual purity, will always command the honor and respect of the unsophisticated multitudes. The common people heard Christ gladly, because He spoke the true thing in the true spirit. And the common people will always honor the Church for what is pure and noble in the life of her members.

Thirdly: *In some it effected a conversion.* "And believers

were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." Many saw in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, and in the miracles the apostles wrought, the hand of God; they believed, turned to the Lord, and identified themselves with His disciples. Thus the young Church produced different effects amongst men; some it frightened off; from some it won respect, and amongst others it won converts. All this it has ever done, and still does in proportion to the amount of Divine purity and truth which it displays in its history.

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## Germs of Thought.

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SUBJECT:—*Spiritual Providence.*

"And Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations. As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan."—Exod. xvi. 32—35.

*Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Sixty-first.*

**I**N the first volume of the "Homilist," page 18, we used these words to illustrate the *Physical Providence of God*. We now employ them to illustrate some points in connection with that wonderful spiritual provision which God in Christ Jesus has made for us as sinners. Whether the manna was intended to be what is called a type of redemptive grace or not, the allusion of Christ and His apostles to it justifies us in using it as an illustration of Gospel blessing.

I. THE MANNA WAS A PROVISION FOR A GREAT EMERGENCY. There were three millions of famishing people in the wilderness ; they had flocks and herds, it is true, but these were not for food, but for sacrifice. In the third verse the children of Israel thus speak to Moses and Aaron :—" Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full ; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." Starvation was on them, and already they were in the grasp of death. God sends them manna to their relief.

It is thus with man spiritually ; he is in a famishing state ; he is poor, miserable, blind, naked ; in this sad condition Christ comes to his rescue. "When we were yet without strength"—without strength to do the true work of life, to prepare for death, to gain acceptance with God—"in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

II. THE MANNA CAME AS A MIRACULOUS INTERPOSITION. The manna sprang not from the desert. The Israelites never saw anything like it before. Its very name—which, as some think, means "*What is it?*"—would thus express their wonder at it. "When the children of Israel saw it they said one to another, What is it ? for they wist not what it was."

The interposition of Christ for the world's restoration is a stupendous miracle. He was the Bread that came down from heaven. His history was unique. The world never saw anything like it before. "Great is the mystery of godliness : God manifest in the flesh."

First : *It came undeserved.* Did these murmuring rebellious Israelites deserve the food ? No ! They deserved the terrible death of famine. Did the world deserve the interposition of Christ ? The question itself is a sufficient answer.

Secondly : *It came unsought.* The Israelites prayed not for it. It came without a breath of prayer. The world pleaded not for Christ ; He came as comes the morning sun, unasked.

### III. THE MANNA CAME AS A UNIVERSAL SUPPLY.

First: *It came in quantities commensurate with the wants of all.* "Gather of it every man, according to his eating." Of the three millions, none need die for want. The provisions of the Gospel are commensurate with the wants of all. Isaiah speaks of it as a feast—a feast spread on the "mountain," open to all—a feast given by the "Lord of Hosts," whose resources are infinite—a feast provided for "all people," not one of the race excluded—"a feast of fat things full of marrow, and of wines on the lees well refined."

Secondly: *It came equally within the reach of all.* It was not given to a certain class of men to deal out; it did not fall nearer to one man's tent than another. There it lay in the open wilderness fresh from heaven every morning. Wherever Christianity goes, its blessings fall within the reach of all. "Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend up into heaven," &c.

IV. THE MANNA CAME WITH DIVINE DIRECTIONS. The general direction is summed up in the sixteenth verse. "This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded, Gather of it every man, according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents." The general principle is this:—*Gather it for yourselves, and distribute it to those who need your help.* There were infants, and, perhaps, infirm adults, who could not go out to gather for themselves. Our grand duty in relation to Gospel blessings may be expressed in two words—*appropriation* and *distribution*. This duty was to be performed—

First: *Proportionately.* The command was to gather according to the "*number of your persons*," and we are told that the children of Israel did so—some more, some less. Some had larger families than others—more dependents—and they required to gather more. It should be somewhat thus in relation to Gospel provisions. Every man should gather for himself; but the man who has a large family, and

a large number of dependents, a larger circle whom he can influence, is especially bound to provide for others. This duty was to be performed—

Secondly: *Betimes*. “And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating; and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.” He that rose not early in the morning—left not his tent ere the sun came forth in its heat—lost the provisions for the day. The work of religion should be commenced early. Youth is emphatically the morning.

Thirdly: *Regularly*. *Every morning*. “They gathered it every morning.” The supplies of yesterday would not answer for to-day, and those of to-day would not do for to-morrow. It is so in religion. Constancy is the condition of its life and growth; “so much the more as we see the day approaching.”

V. THE MANNA DEMANDED THE REMEMBRANCE OF POSTERITY. “And Moses said to Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the Lord, to be kept for your generations.” It was laid up in a golden vase, and it came down in the ark until the temple was plundered by the Babylonians about nine hundred years afterwards. It was a fact worthy of commemoration. All God’s interpositions on behalf of the fallen world are facts that shall be had in everlasting remembrance. For this purpose they are recorded in His Word, that shall stand for ever. His interposition in Christ especially calls for our commemoration. He has given us an institution for the very purpose. Let us attend to it in remembrance of Him.





SUBJECT :—*A Sketch of an Impending Judgment.*

“And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the winds should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.”—Rev. vii. 1—3.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Sixty-second.

**N**OTWITHSTANDING the deep shadow of mystery that rests upon large portions of this book, there are many parts that can be easily turned to a practical account, and that without committing ourselves to any of the current theories of interpretation. That the text points to a judgment that is overhanging the world, entrusted to angels for its execution, and who are restrained in their work by a special messenger from heaven, on account of the godly tenants of the earth, is a view of the passage which scarcely admits of any data for a different opinion.

From the text we see—

I. THE WORLD EXPOSED TO JUDGMENT. It is represented as exposed “*to the four winds of the earth.*” Winds are the symbols of judgment. Thus in Jeremiah xlix. 36, 37, we read—“And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and will scatter them towards all those winds; and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts of Elam shall not come. For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies, and before them that seek their life: and I will bring evil upon them, even my fierce anger, saith the Lord; and I will send the sword after them, till I have consumed them.” And in the prophecy of Daniel (vii. 2), we have these words—“I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.” The *four winds* indicate the *universality* of the judgment.

They were to come from the four points of the compass, north, south, east, west. Whether this universal judgment refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, or some other judicial event that is passed, or points to some future period of retribution in the history of the world, I stay not to inquire. One thing is certain, that *there is a universal judgment impending over this earth*. It hangs over "every corner of the earth." Its winds will rush in fearful tornados from all the points of the compass. *Conscience, Providence, and the Bible*, all point to this universal judgment. For a description of this tremendous event, read—Eccles. xii. 14.; Matt. xxv. 31—33.; Acts xvii. 31.; Rom. ii. 3—6.; Cor. ii. 2, 10.; Jude 14, 15.; 2 Peter iii. 7, 10—12.; Rev. vi. 12, 14.; xx. 12.

From the text we see—

II. THE JUDGMENT ENTRUSTED TO ANGELS. The words speak of "*four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea.*" Angels are the ministers of God. He employs them to execute his judgments. (1) They appeared amidst the terrors of Mount Sinai. (Deut. xxxiii. 2.) "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them." Again in Psalm lxviii. 17 we read:—"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place." (2) They appeared with our Saviour in the destruction of Jerusalem. (Matt. xxiv. 30, 31.) (3) Angels have been frequently engaged in executing Divine judgment on this earth. They acted in connection with the destruction of Sodom, and an angel dealt out judgment to the Egyptians, in the destruction of their firstborn. (Ex. xii. 22.) An angel wreaked vengeance on the people of Jerusalem on account of the sin of David. (2 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17.) An angel destroyed the mighty army of Sennacherib. (2 Kings xix. 35.) (4) Angels are represented as active in the final day of retribution. (Matt. xiii. 39, 41; xxv. 31; 1 Thess. iv. 16;

2 Thess. i. 7—9.) The Eternal Judge then, as now, will work through others.

From the text we see—

III. THE ANGELS RESTRAINED BY A MEDIATOR. “And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God : and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.” Observe—(1) The glorious origin of this angel. He ascended “from the east.” From the fountain of glory. The east whence the stars appear, and the glorious sun comes forth to flood the world with light. Observe—(2) His Divine credentials. “Having the seal of the living God.” Observe—(3) His great earnestness. “Cried with a loud voice.” Who is this angel? Who is represented in this particular case, I know not. But I know that the Great Angel of the Covenant answers well this description. He came from the orient depths of glory with Divine credentials and with great earnestness, in order to stay the angels of retribution from executing their terrible commission. Our great Redeemer holds back the hand of the destroying angel, and the burden of His intercession is, “Hurt not the earth, neither the sea,” &c. To Christ we owe the postponement of the judgment.

From the text we see—

IV. THE MEDIATOR RESTRAINING BECAUSE HIS WORK IS UNFINISHED. Why does this Intercessory Angel, rising from the glorious east, interpose to prevent the judicial angels from discharging their dread commission? Because there was a work to be done. The servants of God “were to be sealed in their foreheads.” The image of the sealing is derived from the book of the prophet Ezekiel. (ix. 2, 4, 5, 6, 11.) Its object was to mark out certain persons as belonging to God, and thus to save them from the miseries of the impending judgment. The effect of the seal visible in the forehead would be

like that of the blood on the door-posts of the Israelites in the last terrible plague of the Egyptians:—"When he seeth it he will pass over the door and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you." Two thoughts are suggested.

First: *That there are men who are yet to receive the seal of God.* Thousands in ages gone by have had His likeness impressed upon them—and thousands are being impressed in this age, but there are millions more to be sealed in future times. There are men from unborn generations who are to be sealed.

Secondly: *That the judgment is delayed until the number of the sealed ones is completed.* "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed," &c.; so that the world is kept up for the "servants" of our God. Thus our blessed Mediator is keeping up the world until all His disciples are gathered into His fold, and His purposes of mercy realized. In the majesty of infinite mercy, He stands as it were in the midst of the universe. He sees the storm of judgment brooding in the heavens; He sees the angels of justice quartered in every part of the firmament ready to execute their terrible commission; He waves His hand and bids them halt. "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads;"—let not even such a breath of judgment pass from your hand as shall wake a ripple on the "sea," or stir a leaf on the "trees;"—let mercy reign supreme until my work is finished. Then, when all my redeemed ones are sealed with the seal of God "on their foreheads," and made secure, then let loose your awful winds. Let them rush with their tornados of fire, and roar with their thunders of retribution, and destroy this earth, for the mystery of God will be finished.

"Accuse not Heaven's delay; if loth to strike,  
Its judgments, like the thunder-gather'd storm,  
Are but the greater."—WEBSTER.

SUBJECT :—*The Greatness of the Redeemer's Life.*

“And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised. There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.”—Ps. lxxii. 15—17.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Sixty-third.

**T**HIS Psalm has to do with David, Solomon, and Christ. First: *David's position.* He nears eternity; hands his sceptre over to Solomon, and this with a kingly spirit. He prayed him to his throne. His heart's desire and prayer to God for him was, that his kingdom should be one scene of glory and power. (Read verses 5—11.) Secondly: *The light in which he viewed all Solomon's material glory.* He looked at it, I think, as typical of the Messiah's mediatorial greatness and majesty, in the accession of all nations to His kingdom. (Read especially verses 15—17.) Applying these words to Christ, we observe—

I. THAT THE GREATNESS OF HIS LIFE IS SEEN IN THE MAGNITUDE OF ITS INFLUENCE.

First: *It is co-extensive with creation.* “All nations shall call him blessed.” This fact is unique. What man has ever secured the loyal affection of a whole empire? But Christ is to be the centre of universal attraction. Analogy, the greatness of the agencies employed, and the Word of God, warrant the conclusion. What a life is Christ's! “The story of the Cross” (ὁ λόγος ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ, 1 Cor. i. 18.) has “a power,” which nothing else has, to conquer and win human hearts. True to the letter are the words, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” Eighteen hundred years have tested this mighty Magnet, Christ, and proved its force, but not weakened it. As surely as the sun draws the circling worlds around it, or as the



lunar orb draws the waters of the ocean towards her, so do souls experience the captivating love of Christ. He attracts the swarthy African, the iron-hearted red Indian, the icy Greenlander, and the subtle Brahmin, and makes them catch the faint reflection and impressive lineaments of His blessed image. Such a life is Grand and Divine !

Secondly : *It is an abiding influence.* "His name shall endure for ever," &c. Rome ran a mighty career of a thousand years, and then it crumbled with corruption, and fell beneath the pressure of ponderous guilt. The life of Christ in His kingdom of redeemed souls is stamped with eternity. "His name shall be continued as long as the sun." That sun that lit the bowers of paradise for the first human pair ; that sun that baked the bricks for the mighty Nimrod to erect the tower of Babel ; that lighted Joshua to fight the battles of God ; and that apparelled itself in a robe of darkness when Christ hung upon the Cross—that eternal orb of light is the symbol to teach the indestructible and mighty life of Christ. It is as vast as time, and lasting as eternity. Men, emperors, come and go like baubles upon the stream ; but Christ lives for ever ! Time destroys not His power, but unfolds it. "He reigneth king for ever."

Thirdly : *It is a blissful influence.* "And men shall be blessed in him." A worm may make many miserable ; but it requires a God-like nature to enhance the happiness of one soul. The life of Christ fills creation with blessedness. This Great Benefactor does this by destroying the sources of misery, and by calling into exercise every fountain of bliss in the soul. All hail to Him who puts an end to weeping, and thrills a world of spirits with pulsations of life eternal ! He is the true Restorer, and only Hope of the world.

Fourthly : *It is reflectively glorious.* "And daily shall he be praised." Ten thousand crowns show the victories He has won. He is the grand object of universal admiration and love. Cherubic legions and redeemed men celebrate his victories in everlasting verse. How majestic the life of the Redeemer. Already His thoughts of mercy and

love are carried in the soldier's knapsack to the battle plain, and floated by the sailor upon the snow-crested billows to distant climes, making the scenes of conquest and navigation glorious. These thoughts consecrate the marriage feast, render sacred the great cemetery of the dead, and inspire with hope a groaning creation. Ride forth, thou mighty conqueror—Ride ! The text suggests—

II. THAT THE GREATNESS OF HIS LIFE IS DEVELOPED THROUGH MEANS. What are the means ?

First : *Truth*. The Gospel contains the great biography of Jesus, and this is the *mighty instrumentality*. "The weapons of our warfare," &c. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," &c.

Secondly : *Wealth*. "To him shall be given of the gold of Sheba." Ancient conquerors required two things of those whom they had subdued. The one was, to have their names stamped upon the people's money ; the other to be prayed for in their public assemblies. There is an allusion to the custom in the text. The treasures of the Indies, and the gold of the Ganges, are ultimate channels through which Christ will unfold the majesty of His life. Ye men of wealth, remember that every piece of gold and silver—ought to appear to you as if stamped with the image of the Son of God. He says "all the gold, and the silver is mine." Let him have it—to erect temples for His praise and to fill the world with His life, and the joys of His salvation.

Thirdly : *Prayer*. "Prayer shall be made for him continually." We attempt no battle with the sceptic who hinges his quibble upon the Divine immutability. We are content to believe that the man of prayer works out a Divine, an eternal idea ; that in consequence of this fact, he has all the force of the Eternal Will upon his side. He must succeed. He links himself to Omnipotence. Ye men of the Church Catholic, let your wealth be placed upon the altar of the Redeemer's service, as a proof of your love ; and there sanctify it with the prayer of faith, and

the world is the Saviour's. What have you done for your Lord? Worse than Balaklava heights of foes are before you. What is your attitude? The heavens are charged with influences to conquer and to save. "Ask and ye shall receive." "Try me herewith," says God, "and see if I will not open the windows of heaven," &c. The text suggests—

III. THAT THE GREATNESS OF HIS LIFE IS EXPERIENCED IN THE HEAVENWARD DIRECTION IT GIVES MANKIND. He makes men pray to and praise Him. "And daily shall he be praised."

First: *Such persons owe their existence to Christ.* "We are his workmanship."

Secondly: *Such persons are the finest specimens of human excellence.* The highest types of character have always been found in men of earnest prayer. Abraham, Noah, Job, Daniel, Paul, and Christ, all prayed. How the Saviour prayed with groans and tears! He is the Divine Idea of what you and I should be.

Thirdly: *Such men alone fully give scope to their faculties to honor Him.* At the throne of grace we can pour out the treasury of our affections to Him who died for us. It is the *Divine* life of Christ, that draws men's souls to pray and to praise. All souls He thus fills with heavenly affections and power. How God-like such a life! What an expanding and victorious life! Great God, help us to show it in deeds! The text suggests—

IV. THAT THE GREATNESS OF HIS LIFE IS SEEN IN THE REALIZATION THROUGH ETERNITY OF HIS WORK ON EARTH. "He shall live," are words that suggest this truth.

First: *He will live in all that relates to man on earth; in such things as institutions, literature, &c.* His name will be emblazoned upon the page of every new work, and His life will be the standard of all institutions.

Secondly: *He will live in the affectionate remembrance of a*

*redeemed people.* On the throne of their hearts He will ever abide. "That in all things he might have the pre-eminence."

Thirdly : *He will live as the expression of all excellence.* Foremost upon the throne, He stands as the embodiment and expression of all *love, benevolence, truth, justice, and authority.* He is God revealed to the intelligent universe. What a sight ! Who will be prepared thus to see God ?

Fourthly : *He will live as the centre of all attraction to the glorified Church.* As Benefactor, He will appeal to our gratitude. What blood but His secured our pardon ? As our King, He will appeal to our loyalty. Whose shall we be but His, who won us by His love ? As our representative and pledge of glory, He appeals to our aspirations after immortality. His history will afford infinite scope for study, and every new discovery of Him will entwine our affections around His great heart for ever. "He shall live" through the vast cycles of eternity, in the affections of redeemed and beatified men. What a vision does our subject open to view, of "Emmanuel, God with us." Generations come and go, but "He lives." Friends fling a single glance upon us and pass into the regions of the dead, but "He lives," and remains "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Emperors grasp the sceptre, and put on the crown, and death wrenches the one from them, and time decays the other ; but immortality blazes upon Prince Messiah, and time only adds lustre to His diadem and felicity to His reign. In the language of the Church we would say, "Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious name ; evermore praising Thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory : glory be to Thee, O Lord, Most High !" Thou King of Saints, Thy life Divinely pure shall be our model ; Thy heart of boundless love shall be the sun to thaw the cold stillness of wintry death, that binds our souls in perpetual chains. Then shall they swell with strange and heavenly emotions, and expand into Diviner life. The seed of life Thou hast dropped into the soil of human spirit, and "the

fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon." The scenes of life are ever brightening and widening ; and new fields of beauteous scenery are evermore depicted to our gaze, in which we descry the sublime, the lovely life of Jesus, the "Lord of Glory."

*Emmanuel Church,  
Camberwell.*

J. H. HILL.

SUBJECT :—*The Sins of Godly Men.*

"And, behold, thou hast with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim : but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I swore to him by the LORD, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword. Now therefore hold him not guiltless : for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him ; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood."—1 Kings ii. 8, 9.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Sixty-fourth.

**I**T is a profound question, yet one which ought not to concern us overmuch, though at times our attention is perforce attracted to it : In what greater degree are men responsible for their characters than for their deficiency of brain or deformity of limb ? It is our first plea for the murderer, the eccentric, the suicide, that they are the victims of temporary insanity or of uncontrollable passion, and that their ebullition in any particular instance was due more to the vehemence of natural character than to depravity of mind. Professors of mere worldly morality are generally very willing to put the best construction on equivocal acts of men of their own stamp. Generosity of this kind, though antagonistic to justice, has that about it which the most rigid judiciary cannot utterly condemn ; but by a strange contradiction and revulsion of sentiment, the same men look for the most absolute perfection and spotless purity of character in others who strive humbly to walk in



the way of Heaven's uprightness. What these critics never attempt themselves, they deem the easiest possible matter for other persons to perform. They, it may be, revel secretly in mire, yet are the first to point the finger of scorn at the faintest blemish in those they affect to despise. They brand the endeavor of others to avoid evil as a profession of Pharisaic sanctity; and instead of honoring a man for the struggles and self-denial which he has endured in his attempt to overcome the wrong, they point with exultation to those of his acts in which it is evident he has not succeeded in his righteous intent.

A man of God still retains to the very last the bias of nature his Maker endowed him with at the first. Christianity does not reduce men to one dead level, it rather brings out in greater relief those parts of our character which are in harmony with its principles, while tending to tone down others with which it has no affinity.

If, then, the good man in this present age is so misunderstood, and his actions so unmercifully criticized, what little chance is there of the characters of men in past times being rightly appreciated and justly dealt with? It is here that history fails, and men's names obtain a lustre or a tarnish most unjustly through the narrow presentation of their lives as viewed by the standard of the present day. To appreciate or condemn hastily, in the same way as our historians libel a man in terse stereotyped phrase, as being a wretch or a saint, is most unjust. Whatever their degree, we must recollect the age they lived in, the circumstances surrounding them, the habits of thought in which they were bred, and the silent influence of the customs and actions of their contemporaries. The Almighty is ever the same, but the peoples of every age, in every land, differ from their sires. Races, like their languages, are expunged from the earth, melting away as a mass, and re-absorbed in fragments, losing thereby for ever their individuality. Where once the stalwart Roman stood—there now the effeminate Italian basks in languid ease. The bandit lurks where erst the philosophic

Greek discoursed. All this the Almighty recollects if we forget ; and assuredly will judge men as well from that outside them, as from that within their hearts. The world to Him is one vast school which He is educating. The men of old knew but the alphabet, we now should be the ripest scholars. Knowledge in those old times was as the first faint gleam of daylight on the horizon ; but it now sheds its light as the noonday sun. Let us then approach, with all humility, the subject before us, remembering that in judging others harshly, we doubly criminate ourselves.

There are three ways in which David may have been influenced in giving this dying injunction to his son:—

I. AS THE AGENT, UNCONSCIOUS OR OTHERWISE, OF DIVINE JUSTICE. We cannot conceive this measure as being the consummation of a Divine purpose, it had apparently so much about it of human plan. The Almighty's power, when exerted in support of justice, has always been certain and direct in its action, without any reference to contingencies. A man's punishment never precedes his crime, nor is inflicted without one. It comes down from heaven direct upon him, without equivocation or compromise. All is clear ; the books are open, wherein the crime was writ just as it occurred. Heaven's reporters are hovering near us, ever busy, always transcribing into those terrible volumes. With God it is all justice or all mercy ; no half measures. No sparing for a time in uncertainty or doubt as to our guilt, begetting in us a sense of false security, till suddenly the knell of doom sounds on our deafened ears. How different from man's punishment this. The very manner of Shimei's death is the greatest argument against its having been ordained by God. (verses 36—46.) Even David and his son were ashamed of it ; and shall God be credited with what they despised ? For the honor of his father's name, as well as his own, Solomon disguised his real object by laying a trap for Shimei, puerile in its meanness, and yet sufficient to attain the end desired. How men must have wondered, and become awed, extolling, may-be, the rigid

fulfilment of his kingly word, which was only the flimsy cloak to a planned death. Men have often suffered by such means. Their enemies, anxious for their destruction, out of envy, hatred, or malice, have concealed their real motives, which were personal, under pretexts that were apparently unconnected in every way with their wishes or desires.

David's conduct in giving this dying injunction to his son may have been influenced—

II. BY A CONSCIENTIOUS DESIRE TO ADMINISTER HUMAN JUSTICE, ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD. David, we are told, was a man of God, one after His own heart. Intimately acquainted with the Divine nature—keenly alive to Heaven's requirements—and inspired most devoutly with the desire to imitate his Maker's character—he is prominently put forth as, in many respects, the model of a godly man. “O, how I love thy law,” he cries. He loved it for its holiness, revered it for its perfection, thus showing he was not afraid of its severity. How, then, with such clear perceptions of the Divine attributes, can we conceive of him as acting in this matter conscientiously and with cool judgment, in the full belief of the harmony of his decree with Almighty rectitude? To do so is to dishonor the unswerving uprightness of God's justice, or to depreciate David's experiences and knowledge of the Divine character. We would rather be left to our final alternative in—

III. REGARDING HIS INJUNCTION AS PROMPTED BY REVENGE. As a man he forgave Shimei at the time of his crime, which, then, should have been utterly effaced from his memory. Heavenly justice, if not satisfied, would have taken its own way of vindicating itself, without further action on David's part. Eastern habits and usages, though fearfully vindictive until revenge or mediation was effected, were all against the remembrance of the deed done unto him after it had once been forgiven. To the present day the rigid hospitality and oath of an Arab to his enemy, when thrown

on his honor, is proverbial. With David, as a man of God and Israel's law-giver, we must utterly disconnect this act, and attribute it entirely to a flaw in his character, which, at the last, re-asserted its natural power in antagonism to Divine grace.

Feud and retaliation have ever been the precursors of law, order, and Christianity; and even now, among some nations, one of the most sacred principles a man acknowledges is to avenge a loved one's death, or his own personal wrong, till the third and fourth generations. It is the hard unbroken ground of nature, untouched by the dew and sun of heaven. Undoubtedly in David's time, this custom of revenge and retaliation was rife among the Eastern nations, along with many other practices at variance with progress and religion. Men were brought up to them, accepted them as their moral clothing, and acted up conscientiously to their injunctions. So it was with David; though a man of God, in whom He delighted, yet the customs of his time, the habits of thought of those about him, with the silent effect of their example, had unknown, maybe, to him, so impregnated his being, as to germinate into ungodly actions at any sudden temptation or crisis, with sufficient power to sweep away, for a time, the tuition and principles of his heavenly life.

In nothing, during life, do men differ so greatly as at death. The weakest on earth often enter the gates of heaven triumphant. While yet in the flesh, one foot is firmly planted on the threshold of the mansion prepared for them. On the other hand, the spiritual giant now is frequently then but as a timid and fearful child; often, indeed, appearing to lose his entire spiritual existence in the fearful struggle which Satan and his earthly nature keep up in endeavoring to wrest another soul from heaven to people the wilderness of hell.

In David's case, what mighty lessons this should teach. Here was a patriarch indeed, at the last moments of his existence succumbing to the seducing wiles and powerful instincts of his grosser nature. Men may well dread death, for then is the last great struggle between earth and heaven—nay hell and heaven; it is Satan's last chance, for, seeing the hovering

wings of death slowly enfolding its object, he knows the hour of physical pain and weakness approaches, so puts forth his mighty energies in one last grand endeavor, in which the deadliest hate and fear, and every terrible passion is at work, striving to counteract the power of his Almighty antagonist. But the Almighty knows him and He knows us. Like David, we may be vengeful on our death-bed ; our spirits may become dim, and weak, and faint ; yet, He knows our hearts, that we are in Him, and He in us, and pardons the wanderings of our faltering footsteps as we totter to His threshold ; until, as we gain the door and faintly knock, it opens wide, disclosing a scene of light, and joy, and bliss, with the inspiring words sounding gladly in our ears :—  
 “Be of good courage, I will never leave thee or forsake thee.”

R. LISWIL, B.A.

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## Biblical Criticism.

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### THE CODEx SINAITICUS :—*Various Readings.*

HAVING thus closely followed the Codex through the first two Gospels, the reader will probably think with us that enough has been done to show the general character of the variations, and the essential agreement of this newly-discovered manuscript with the readings of the Received Text. We shall, therefore, now break off this detailed inquiry, and satisfy what of curiosity may remain, by giving the readings of the Codex in a few celebrated passages in various parts of the New Testament, and then, for the present, take leave of the subject.

In Luke vi. 1, the word *δευτεροπρώτω*, which has given much trouble to commentators, is omitted, as it is in the Vatican, and in several other manuscripts.

In John i. 18, there is a very interesting variation. Instead of *νιός*, we have *Θεός*, so that the clause reads in English,



"The only-begotten *God*, which is in the bosom of the Father," &c. In this reading, the new Codex agrees with the Vatican, the Codex Ephraemi, the Peshito Syriac Version, and many places in the Fathers.

Acts viii. 37 is wanting, as in the Alexandrine, the Vatican, and the Codex Ephraemi.

Acts xx. 28.—The reading here is Θεοῦ, as in the received text. Θεοῦ is the reading of the Vatican; but the Alexandrine, the Codex Ephraemi, the Codex Bezae, and the Codex Claromontanus, read κυρίου.

1 Cor. xiii. 3.—This Codex has καυχῆσθαι, instead of καθήσθαι. "And though I give my body *that I may boast*," &c.

Eph. i. 1.—The words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ are wanting; which agrees with the Vatican, and countenances the opinion that this Epistle was a circular letter addrest to other cities besides Ephesus, perhaps to Laodicea among the rest. Col. iv. 16.

1 Tim. iii. 16.—The original text of this Codex has not Θεός, but ὁς, which was before regarded by the best critics as the true reading, and may now be considered as almost unquestionably so. (Compare Col. i. 27.) Lachmann and Tischendorf both had adopted ὁς, before the discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus. The doctrine of Christ's Deity has sufficient Scriptural proof without needing unsound evidence. If the original reading were—as we believe it was—ὁς, we can understand how its apparent difficulty might have occasioned the substitution of Θεός for it, as indeed a corrector of the twelfth century has actually inserted it above the line in the Codex Sinaiticus without however, erasing the ὁς in its proper place. But if Θεός had been the original reading, it is inconceivable that any scribe, however meddling and rash, should have substituted ὁς. According to Wetstein, Porson, Griesbach, Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Davidson, the original reading of the Alexandrine Codex was ὁς. That this was also the original reading of the Codex Ephraemi, is the opinion of Wetstein, Griesbach, Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Davidson.

1 John v. 7, 8.—The words from ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ in the 7th

verse, as far as ἐν τῇ γῇ in the 8th, are wanting. They are also absent from the Alexandrine and Vatican, *and from every Greek manuscript before the fifteenth century.* They are not found in the old manuscripts of the Vulgate and Syriac Versions; nor are they quoted by the Fathers, even in places where we might have expected it, had the manuscripts they used coincided with the Received Text.

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## The Chair of Theology.

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[This position we have rather been elected to by others, than arrogantly assumed of ourselves. Studious young men, in and out of orders, are adopting the custom of asking us for information and advice respecting a course of theological study, the choice of books, and the like. The thought has occurred, that it would be for their advantage, and our convenience, to throw such remarks as we are able to offer into a systematic form, once for all, that our correspondents may be referred to a standing document.]

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WITH all their shortcomings and faults, men of modern ages are in a better moral condition than the ancients. While they have on the whole more of godliness and more of humanity than of old, they have, also, a deeper, more uneasy, and painful sense of shortcomings and faults. Combined with this uneasiness, there is an aspiration, a hopefulness; and there is much of actual progress, of moral amendment and improvement, as generation succeeds generation. This deeper moral feeling appears not only in modern life, individual and social, but in literature and the arts. Modern laws, manners, and customs, are on the whole more moral than the ancient. There is evident in them a deeper sense of the worth and sacredness of human nature. What we may call the moral attitude of the English towards each other, has often more of dignity, implied significance, and spiritual tenderness, than is ever observable among the Greeks. If English conversation seldom equals the Platonic dialogue in dialectic precision, or in the charms of the fancy, it often far surpasses even that in moral purity and depth.

The ancient historian records political events, whose causes are political ; the modern historian has to trace the causes of wars and revolutions further back into the mysterious recesses of man's nature.

In the Homeric poems, there is a child-like echo of Nature's joyous music ; evil passions are represented rather according to their calamitous effects than their essential nature. The ills of life are pathetically lamented ; the domestic virtues and affections are sung with due tenderness. Yet the want of true Divine reverence renders Homer, with all his beauty and power, morally superficial. The reader of "Hamlet" finds himself in another world, with an indefinite spiritual circuit, and suggestions of mysterious hope and fear, of infinity and eternity.

A similar contrast is presented between the Parthenon and Westminster Abbey. The one is beautiful, indeed ; but it is a shallow beauty, which is at once understood, reaching no further than the eye. The symmetry of the other is not so plain. It was built under the sense of an Infinite Presence, and suggests both reverence and aspiration. If the music and painting of the Greeks are lost, it is not likely that they possessed anything which approached the region of Handel ; and the cartoons of Raphael would in the ancient world have been in every sense an impossibility.

Men of modern times, then, have in their conscience, and manifest in their manners and laws, literature and arts, a familiarity with a higher standard of morality than was generally known of old. With this they are ever, consciously or unconsciously, comparing themselves ; towards correspondence with this they are ever aspiring. They show a knowledge of a whole region of rich morality which was hid from the ancients. There can be no doubt but that this higher moral standard was first promulgated, this new region of moral truth first disclosed, and the consequent change from the ancient to the modern character begun, about the time of the Christian era. Were it possible for an accurate observer to be kept in ignorance

of the cause of this great moral revolution, and to see only the phenomena, he would declare the commencement of it to be contemporary with the early Christian age. Being then acquainted with the facts which give character to that age, he would decide in their favor as the cause of the revolution; he would attribute the moral difference between ancient and modern times, to the appearance and history of Jesus Christ.

The first teachers of Christianity effected this moral revolution. Their undertaking required inestimable power, which, however, they were conscious of possessing, and the result justified their boldness. What was the power by which they contended successfully with Jews, and Greeks, and Barbarians? It was not mainly the power of working miracles; far less was it mere eloquence. It was essentially a moral power. They had received a singular impression of the excellence of a Person whom they had familiarly known. His character was absolutely new; not only realizing the best ideas of the best moralists, but far surpassing their loftiest flights. This impression was their own strength, and they were able to impart it to others. It is the character of Jesus Christ which is found in the last analysis to have been essentially the power which subverted Paganism, led captive men of all nations by a mysterious and irresistible charm; it was this which dispelled their ignorance, overcame their prejudice, and founded a new and universal community of a new humanity, which was irrespective of nation and even of sex.

If the character of Jesus Christ was the strength of Christianity then, the relation remains the same for ever. Every real acquisition now, is made in the same manner. The infidel or the heathen perceives Christ's perfection, and yields himself to Christ as the highest Being he knows, the highest he can conceive, and whom he loves and trusts immeasurably. Only as the true character of Christ is clearly and purely exhibited, may Christians now expect their number to increase. The propagative power of Christianity is the central truth of Christianity.

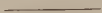
In order to self-preservation, Christianity requires constant renewal by returning back into itself. Thus only can its genuine character be retained. Thus, also, it is to be emphasized. The generation which has the clearest view and the firmest grasp of the character of Christ, will possess the most genuine and the most vigorous Christianity.

The excellence of Christ has a charm even for the little child. It subdues the savage. But with every new degree of moral and intellectual cultivation, and every new acquisition of experience, the simple narrative of the Evangelists acquires new and grander significance, and asserts a mightier influence. It is so both with progressive individuals and with progressive society. There is, indeed, no limit to this increasing significance and power.



## The Christian Year.

BY A CLERGYMAN.



### *The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.*

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”—Matt. xxii. 39.

THE person to whose question the answer was given, of which the text forms a part, was a Pharisee, a lawyer, and a scribe. His question, *Master, which is the great commandment in the Law?* was characteristic of the class to which he belonged, who liked better to dispute about the comparative importance of commands than to obey them. The Lord in answer, refers to the Book of Deuteronomy vi. 4, 5, for the first great command, and to the Book of Leviticus xix. 18, for the second. He made a practice in his teaching, especially when in the hearing of the Pharisees, of referring to the Law,



rather than announce new doctrines on His own authority. The authority of the Law was acknowledged, and this gave Him the opportunity of blaming the neglect of it, and of pointing out its spiritual meanings. By this habit, moreover, He put His own stamp on the Old Testament, and showed that His teaching was one with its teaching, and was founded upon it; and that His coming was the fulfilment of prophecy. If the men of His generation were bound to believe in Him because the Law bore witness to Him, we are no less bound to believe the Law because He bears witness to the Law. But He does not simply refer to the Law. He amplifies it; giving it a wider interpretation than was familiar to His hearers. So when another lawyer (Luke x. 29) asked Him in reply to a similar answer to a like question, *And who is my neighbour?* Jesus teaches him by the parable of the Good Samaritan that his neighbours were not Jews only, but that neighbourly offices and kindness were due to all with whom he came in contact. In the passage of Leviticus, from which the text is quoted, the word *neighbour* is used of brethren who were of the nation of Israel, *the children of thy people*. But interpreted by the parable of the Good Samaritan, the word is extended to men in general. We are bound by Christ's law to regard men as our neighbours, without respect of class or of nation, and *to love them as ourselves*.

At the same time, we cannot help admiring the wisdom which has chosen the unostentatious term *neighbour*. Some persons profess to be general philanthropists, and it is a very common remark, that such as are the loudest and most pretentious professors of an indefinite good-will towards the whole race of mankind, are often cold and unfeeling towards those particular members of it with whom they are the most nearly conversant. The Bible is not a book of theory, but of practice. It does not require from us a showy, universal benevolence; but what, though less pretending, is of greater importance, that we should love *our neighbours* as ourselves.

No one who has thoughtfully compared the spirit of the old Pagan world with that of modern Christian society, can have failed to perceive a great difference. With all the faults of the present, it is immeasurably superior to the past. The superiority is especially and remarkably obvious in regard to the estimate of human nature. In Egypt, Greece, and Rome, the multitude were comparatively uncared for. They were used by their superiors; but the notion of duty towards them, founded on their partaking of common human nature, was rare and uninfluential. The poor were unprovided for. Great public charities, schools for the people, hospitals for the sick, the parochial system, and a general recognition of man as such—in conversation, manners, laws, and above all in that inward sentiment of humanity which is now largely implied in our conversation and manners, and on which our laws are largely based—all these belong characteristically, if not exclusively, to modern times. The inward sentiment of society underwent, in this respect, a marvellous revolution about the time of the Christian era. It was then that men began to feel the value of man. This fundamental change was due to the example, the teaching, and the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. Of this sentiment of humanity the New Testament is full. There had been a new revelation of God, and this involved a new revelation of man. There had been an outburst of Divine love towards us, and this taught us to love one another. Christ had closed a life of love by dying for us, and the impression of His Spirit taught the observance of His command, taken indeed from the Old Testament, but issued with a new meaning by Him, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*.

I. The text recognizes the principle that *some of God's commands are greater than others*.

The lawyer asks, *Which is the great commandment in the law?* Jesus finds no fault with the phraseology of the question, but uses it in His answer: *This is the first and great commandment: . . . And the second is like unto it. . . . On*

*these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.* According to Christ's teaching, there are two commands which exceed all the others in greatness.

One command may be greater than another *because it is founded in eternal truth and fitness.* God may command whatever pleases Him, and whatever He commands we are bound submissively to observe. He has seen fit to command some things for which the reason was temporary and circumstantial. This was the case with the great body of the precepts of the ancient law of rites and ceremonies. He has seen fit to command some other things for which there was no reason but His will; as for instance when He commanded Adam to abstain from the fruit of a certain tree, in mark of homage to his Creator, Sovereign and Benefactor. Any other abstinence or action might, so far as we can see, have answered the purpose; but God chose to institute this, which, therefore, was made binding. But there are other commands again which are founded on the nature of things, and these are the greatest. Our duty to worship and serve God, depends on His glorious perfection, and on our relation to Him as creatures and constant recipients of His bounty. Our duty to speak the truth to each other, and to respect each other's life and property, is founded in nature, and is enforced by revelation. The command in the text has this original, unchangeable character. Because man is what he is, it is his duty to love his neighbour as himself.

One command, again, may be greater than another *because it comprehends that other.* We must not lie, and we must not steal. It would be hard to tell which was of the greater importance. Such duties are mostly on a level, nor does one comprehend another; but love comprehends them all. He who loves his neighbour, will certainly not deceive him to his hurt, nor defraud, nor oppress him. If men loved one another, there need be no severe laws for the preservation of order, and the safety of life and property. If men loved one another, class would never be provoked by class to rise up in

riot, intent on violence and revolution. *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; wherefore love is the fulfilling of the law.* He who loves his neighbour as himself, will not be content with doing him mere justice, but will proceed to kindness and the mercy whose *quality is not strained by rules.*

II. The text represents *humanity as equally important with godliness.* "This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto it."

It is like it in *foundation.* Both are based on unchangeable truth and fitness. And it is like it in *comprehensiveness;* for as love to God includes and ensures all duty towards Him, so love to our neighbour includes and ensures all duty towards man.

It is so *like it, that the two commandments are dependent on each other for fulfilment.* Love to God and love to man cannot exist separately. The same disposition of heart fulfils both commandments. They are *alike in their objects,* God and man, for man is made in the image of God. They are, therefore, *witnesses to each other, in respect both to obedience and disobedience.* You cannot be right with man unless you are right with God; you cannot be right with God unless you are right with man. You cannot atone for impiety towards God by good-nature towards your fellow; nor can you atone for injustice or unkindness to man by scrupulous attention to the forms of religion. *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* Therefore the Church requires from those who come to the Holy Table, that they "be in perfect charity with all men."

III. The text makes *self-love the standard of love to our neighbour.*

Self-love, or a regard for our own happiness, is an ineradicable instinct of nature. It is as much a part of our

nature as the desire for food. It is altogether distinct from selfishness. Selfishness is inconsistent with good-will to our neighbour ; self-love is coincident with love to our neighbour. We cannot much benefit him, if we neglect our own interests ; and, on the other hand, by benefitting him we are benefitting ourselves. Such is the connection of man with man, of Christian with Christian. The doctrine that we are *members one of another*, is no mere exhortation, but an original fact of nature ; a fact emphasized by grace, and upon it the exhortation is founded. Our mutual dependence has been a part of our constitution from the very first. The Bible is so far from condemning self-love, which is a due regard to our own well-being, that it is constantly appealed to as in the text. There is no reason to wish that self-love were weaker in the world than it is, but quite the contrary. It were well for the individual and the community if self-love were generally better understood and more completely followed. The mistake has been in supposing that there is any measure of inconsistency between self-love and the love of our neighbour, instead of seeing that they are mutually helpful, and that each completes and supplements the other.

Our Lord requires in the text, not only that we have the *same kind* of love for others as we have for ourselves, but that our love to others should *bear a due proportion* to our love to ourselves. What the due proportion is, the text does not obviously determine. The Divine Law does not require impossibilities. Every man has necessarily a closer and more impressive perception of his own wants than he can have of the wants of others, even of his nearest relations and dearest friends. The very use of the word *neighbour*, πλησίος, one who is *near* to us, whom we know and ought to feel for *next* to ourselves, points this way. Yet we may well believe that the more our love to our neighbour approaches *equality* with our love to ourselves, the nearer we come to conformity with the perfect Law.

IV. It must also be remembered, that, *as self-love is*



*elevated, and its limits extended by the Gospel, so love to our neighbour, of which the other is the standard, is heightened and enlarged also.* Without the Gospel, self-love were a far meaner thing. It would respect merely our worldly interests, with perhaps some very indefinite and uncertain aspiration and hope of Divine approval and of future happiness.

But self-love is exalted and amplified by Christianity. The Gospel tells me that God is my Father, that I am very dear to Him, that to rescue me from ruin and bring me to Himself in forgiveness and peace, He has *not spared His Only-begotten Son*, and that His Spirit is continually striving to renew in me my Father's image. The Gospel tells me that, by taking my nature, Christ has not only shown how highly He valued it, but has imparted to it a new and incalculable value and dignity. Thus the Gospel inspires me with a new and noble self-love, since it gives me an unspeakably wider and brighter view than I had without it, of my true interest, and of the blessings which I am chosen to attain. It fills me with new hopes, aspirations, aims.

But as the Gospel enhances and ennobles my self-love, so it enhances and ennobles my love to my neighbour, which, according to the Divine Law of our text, is referred to the other as a standard. My neighbour is now no longer merely my human brother; he is my brother in Christ. He is my neighbour in the kingdom of heaven. None of these blessings are mine in any sense in which they do not belong to him also. He also is a child of God. Together we bend before the throne with *Our Father* on our lips. His is that nature which Christ assumed, for which Christ has died, which Christ has taken up to heaven. *By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.* Therefore in proportion to my desire to avail myself of these stupendous blessings, must be my desire to further them amongst my neighbours, fellow-partakers of grace, joint-heirs of glory.

Alas! that it should be necessary to add, that there is no duty which Christians need to be reminded of more constantly and earnestly, than this of love to their neighbour. The love

of God is an obviously supreme obligation. The worship and service of God are, in some sort at least, performed by most. It is easy to make a profession of godliness, but to test the sincerity of that profession is not so easy. We cannot pry into each other's hearts, and we are forbidden to make the attempt. But the love of our neighbour is something more palpable, since it is easy to be tested by works. And this love of our neighbour is too generally neglected. Yet, as we have seen, without this, in vain are our loudest and showiest professions of godliness. Without this, religion is a delusion. Without this, vain are all our knowledge, orthodoxy, and ritual correctness. Oh! it is most sad to see a Christian who has not learned this first lesson in Christ's school; who has no delight in the establishment or extension of Christ's kingdom, but has to be stimulated by other considerations to contribute money; who can enjoy his own good things undisturbed by the sufferings of the poor and the anxieties of the needy; who professes himself a disciple of the Most Merciful, while his heart is the home of selfishness. Let such persons be told that if they suppose themselves to be in any wise worthy of their Christian calling, or to be aught but abominable in God's sight, they are deceiving themselves. *Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* God grant that such may awake ere they hear the fearful words, *Forasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto ME*—that their hearts may be so melted by the love of Christ, as to be turned to that mercy towards others, without which, in vain will they look to find it for themselves!

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# The Preacher's Finger-Post.

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## ABRAHAM'S INTERCESSION FOR SODOM.

"And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes: Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it. And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake. And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there. And he said, behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake. And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall

be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake. And the Lord went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place."—Gen. xviii.23—33.

THIS is one of the most ancient prayers on record; and it is certainly one of the most wonderful. It throws light upon the good and the evil of the world, and upon the connection of the great God with both. It teaches two things which are especially worthy of our notice, inasmuch as it shows what man may become and what man may achieve on this earth. It reveals—

### I. THE CLOSE INTIMACY WHICH A GOOD MAN MAY HAVE WITH HIS MAKER.

"And Abraham drew near and said," &c. The patriarch feels himself in the very presence of the Almighty. Three things indicate his closeness of intimacy. First: *He knew his Maker's purpose.* The Eternal had treated him as a friend, and made him His confidant. He told him what He intended doing with Sodom, the adopted country of his nephew Lot. Shall I hide

from Abraham the thing that I do?" said the Almighty. No! He had it not in His heart to hide it from His friend. He told him, and Abraham's mind was full of it now, full of God's thought, and with this great thought filling his nature, he entered into His presence. A great thought from God taken into our being will carry us into His presence. Secondly: *He felt His Maker's presence.* He spoke to Him—to Him, not as an element, a power, an abstraction, but to Him as a person with whom he was in felt contact. He felt God to be the most *real* object in the universe to him, filling his inner horizon with His presence, and flooding his nature with strange emotions. Thirdly: *He heard his Maker's voice.* He heard the answer to every petition head-dressed, from the "fifty" down to the "ten." He felt within him the warm responses of the Deity to all the entreaties of his soul. He heard God. Such was the close intimacy which Abraham, the friend of God, now had with his Maker. Was this privilege something restricted to the patriarch, or is it a blessing to which all the good are welcome? The latter, I venture to believe. Enoch and Noah walked with God. Moses spoke to Him. David "felt

him always before him," &c. The grand object of Christ's mediation was to promote this intimacy between man and his Maker. "He hath ascended on high, led captivity captive: received gifts for men; that the Lord God might dwell among us." Oh! to have this intimacy, to have our minds filled with God's great thought, feel ourselves in His great presence, and hear His voice responding to all the profound aspirations of our nature. This is religion—this is heaven.

"Oh! for a closer walk with God,  
A calm, a heavenly frame."

II. THE WONDERFUL INFLUENCE WHICH A GOOD MAN MAY HAVE OVER HIS MAKER. A sceptical philosophy will sneer at such an assertion as this; yet the record of Abraham's intercession justifies it, nay, demands it. Six times the patriarch prays, and every time he gains his point; and we are left to infer, that if he had persevered in the line of supplication he was pursuing, he would have revoked the judgment of Heaven and saved Sodom. Heaven ceased to grant, only as Abraham ceased to ask. A prayer exerting such an influence upon the Divine mind, certainly deserves to be well considered.

What were its characteristics? First: *It was definite.* The patriarch had one object in view—the salvation of Sodom. That object filled and fired his soul. I consider this definiteness an essential element of true prayer. Modern prayers, in which the petitioner frequently asks for all the variety of objects which his imagination can suggest, are not prayers at all in the Biblical sense. Nearly all, if not all, the successful prayers of the Bible are brief and definite; examples—Bartimæus, the publican, penitent thief, &c. A long wordy prayer, like a volume of ciphers—stands for nothing. His prayer—Secondly: *Was unselfish.* Some men's prayers are the breathings of selfishness; greed running into devotion. The burden of all is protection from all evil, possession of all good. In this prayer of the patriarch there is not one particle of this. The man loses self in the interests of Sodom. The men of Sodom are everything to him; he is but "dust and ashes." A benevolent prayer must ever be mighty because it chimes in with the eternal will of Heaven, which is benevolence. His prayer—Thirdly: *Was trustful.* Some prayers are irreverent, dictatious. The Almighty is often told what He ought to do, what

He should do. I often think there is as much profanity in some prayers as in the oaths of the vulgar blasphemer. How reverentially trustful is the patriarch's prayer: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" As if he had said, "I have the utmost confidence that whatever thou doest will be right." True prayer leaves the results with God. "Not my will, but thine be done." To work the human will into a submission to the Divine, is *true* prayer. His prayer—Fourthly: *Was humble.* How profoundly abased he appears in the presence of his Maker. "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes." No man can approach the Almighty in the true spirit of prayer, without having profound consciousness of the infinite disparity between him and his Maker. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." There is much pride in modern prayer. In some cases there is a familiarity that is most unseemly and revolting. His prayer—Fifthly: *Was importunate.* He throws his whole nature into his petitions. His soul is on fire with the object he seeks, and he pleads and pleads again. Our prayers are often awfully mechanical, mere leverage, not volition—



a thing of lip, not life. Jacob wrestling with the angel, and the importunate widow, are types of earnest prayer. It was this definite, unselfish, trustful, humble, importunate prayer, that obtained this influence with Heaven; and this is the kind of prayer that ever has succeeded, and always will. This is the kind of prayer to which answers are promised, and to which answers are always given. With this kind of prayer Moses saved the Israelites, Elijah sealed and unsealed the heavens, the disciples in the upper room at Jerusalem brought down the Pentecostal showers.

Learn, brother, from this subject two things. First: *The spiritual blessedness of a good man.* What intimacy with, and what influence upon, the Almighty has he. Learn—Secondly: *The social value of a good man.* Abraham was almost saving Sodom. Well does our Saviour call the godly the “the light of the world,” the “salt of the earth.” Verily they are so. They are the safe-guards of the nation. Every good man is a link in that golden chain with which mercy belts the human world, and prevents the explosive force of its sins from riving it to pieces.

#### THE IMMORTALITY OF LOVE.

“Charity never faileth.”—1 Cor. xiii. 8.

CHARITY means *love*;—not a gregarious sentiment, a sectarian sympathy, or a mere passing affection, however rightly directed, but a generous moral sympathy with the race, springing from a dominant affection for the Creator: that which Jesus embodied in perfection.\* Amongst the many things which Paul predicates in this magnificent chapter concerning love, is its *Permanence*.

#### I. IT WILL “NEVER FAIL” AS AN ELEMENT OF MORAL POWER.

Love is the strongest force in the soul. First: *It is the strongest sustaining power.* Our present state is one of trial and sorrow. Burdens press on all, in all grades of society. Godly love is the best sustaining power under all; it is the only power that can appropriate the upholding promises of God. All Divine promises are made to the loving. Secondly: *It is the strongest resisting power.* We have not only burdens to oppress, but enemies to wound and destroy. If love pre-occupies the soul, temptations are powerless. No one can draw us astray unless he enlists in some degree our

\* See “Homilist,” Vol. I., New Series, p. 433.

affections, and if our love be centred on God we are immoveable. Love builds around the soul a rampart, so invulnerable, that the attacks of the enemy fall on it but to rebound. Thirdly: *It is the strongest aggressive power.* We have not only to bear up with fortitude under trials, and to resist with success temptations, but we have battles to fight and victories to win. Love is at once the inspiration and the qualification for the warfare; it at once constrains and arms us in the battle. There is nothing so aggressive in the moral world as love. It is a fire that spreads its flames until it encompasses all the objects within its sphere. Man can stand before anything sooner than love. He who wields the bayonet and the sword may be laughed to scorn, but he who wields the argument of love employs a power to subdue the spirit. Men instinctively throw open their hearts to the admission of the generous and the kind, but bolt them as with irons against the selfish and malign. As a sustaining, resisting, aggressive power, love will "never fail." All the energies of the soul grow under its influence as nature under the sky of spring. It is the breath of God, the atmosphere in which spirits revel

in the vigor of undying youth.

II. IT WILL "NEVER FAIL" AS A PRINCIPLE OF SOCIAL UNITY. Deep in the heart of man is the desire for union with his fellow. Isolation and division are naturally repugnant to his social nature. He wishes to flow with the race as waters with the stream. His ingenuity has been taxed for ages in the invention of schemes for union. As the result we have a number of confederations, some based on political sympathy, some on material interests, some on theological dogmas, some on mere carnal affinities; but there is no real *soul union* in these, no coalition of hearts. LOVE alone can secure this. We are only one with those we love with the moral affections of our nature. But we can only love the loveable. True, but love is the loveable. It is this charity, this Divine love in another that invests him with beauty, and gives him a power to draw to him the love of his fellows. Two really loving souls are one. Love in the moral empire is what attraction is in the material; uniting those together who are united with the centre of their being. This is the principle by which Christ binds His people together in one, and binds

them to the hierarchies of the good : it "never faileth" as a principle of social unity.

III. IT WILL "NEVER FAIL" AS A SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL HAPPINESS. Love is joy. First: *It expels from the mind all the elements unfavorable to happiness.* Malice, envy, avarice, jealousy, "fear which hath torment," and remorse, revenge, and all such affections, which are the fountains of spiritual misery, can no more co-exist with heavenly love than frost in the tropics or darkness in the noon-tide sun. Secondly: *It generates in the mind all the elements of spiritual joy*,—hope, gratitude, adoration, and delightful sympathies with man, the universe, and God. Love sets all the strings of life's lyre to music, it brings the soul like a wandered orb from chaos, links it to its own centre, and fills it with the light and life of heaven. It "*never faileth*" as a source of joy.

Brother, get this unfailing thing within thee ; it is the pulse of the universe, it is the life of God, it is the river that maketh glad the city of the blessed. Covet earnestly this best gift. Learn to "comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ

which passeth knowledge, *that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God.*"

#### THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY.

"And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery ; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned : but what sayest thou ? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last : and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers ? hath no man condemned thee ? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee : go, and sin no more."—John viii. 3—11.

THOUGH Tischendorf, Thier, Alford, Tholuck, Trench, and others, reject this narrative as not genuine, and, therefore, not entitled to a place in the inspired volume, other

and more numerous critics, whose scholarship and authority are unsurpassed, maintain it is a constituent portion of sacred truth. The reasons that Webster and Wilkinson in their Greek Testament adduce in favor of its genuineness, we accept as sufficient for the purpose. The incident is in exquisite keeping with the whole Gospel history. The scribes and Pharisees here, are exactly what they appeared everywhere else; and Christ's conduct here, too, accords with the whole tenor of His life as sketched in the Gospels. Amongst the remarks it suggests, there are three worthy of special attention, and which are true, whether the narrative is inspired or not. It suggests—

I. THAT THE VILEST SINNERS ARE OFTEN THE GREATEST ACCUSERS. Who were the accusers of this adulteress? The scribes and Pharisees; and according to Christ's judgment, and according to the judgment of all who would look at actions through His system of morality, they were, of all sinners, the greatest. It is true that on this occasion their accusation of the woman was inspired by their dislike to Christ, rather than a dislike to her, or a hatred of her crime. "They say unto him,

Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou. *This they said tempting him, that they might have to accuse him.*" They sought by this to entrap Him, to get Him to do or say something in the matter on which they could found a charge that would lead to His ruin. If He acquitted her, they would accuse Him of violating the law of Moses; and if He condemned her, they would accuse Him of political usurpation, for the power to condemn to death was invested entirely in Roman authority. But whether their conduct in this instance was prompted by a dislike to Christ; or a dislike to the woman, it suggests and illustrates the truth that the greatest sinners are generally the greatest accusers. The more base and corrupt a man is, the more ready he is to charge crimes on others, and the more severe he is in his censures on the conduct of his fellow-men. The more unchaste, untruthful, dishonest, a man is, the more ready is he to suspect the chastity, truthfulness, and probity of others. Take care of social accusers. The demon of the old Scribes and Pharisees is in them. It suggests—

II. THAT THE SEVEREST JUDGE OF SINNERS IS THEIR OWN CONSCIENCE. See how Jesus touched the consciences of these sinners. He "stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, *as though he heard them not*. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst." Observe two things. First: *Christ's method of waking up their consciences*. (1) He expresses by a symbolical act His *superiority* to their malignant purposes. They were full of unholy excitement. Evil in them was now a passion, and they were impatient for Him to commit Himself; but He is sublimely calm. He stoops down and writes on the ground as if He were utterly indifferent to their miserable aims. They must have felt this. There is often a power in holy silence, which no words, however eloquent, can carry. (2) He puts the question of the woman's punishment

upon their *own* consciences. "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." As if He had said, "I do not defend her conduct; stone her if you like; she deserves stoning. But let her be stoned by those who are free from sin, for it is monstrous for one sinner to stone another. Are you without sin? Then stone her. If not, take care." This touched them. Another thing to be observed is—Secondly: *The force of their awakened conscience*. "And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last." Conscience-smitten, they went out from the presence of Christ as if scared by His majestic purity. This conscience for a time confounded their purposes, and abashed them with their own wickedness. "One by one" they skulked away. Ah! There is no judge so severe and crushing in his sentence as that of a guilty conscience. It suggests—

III. THAT THE GREATEST FRIEND OF SINNERS IS JESUS CHRIST. The accusers are gone, but the accused is there with Jesus alone. "When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman,



he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? she said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." First: *He declines pronouncing a judicial condemnation upon her.* "Neither do I condemn thee." It does not mean that Christ did not disapprove her conduct and condemn her *morally*, but that *judicially* He declined passing sentence upon her. He neither possessed nor claimed any jurisdiction in civil or criminal affairs. He left the work of the magistrate for the magistrate to do. He did not come to stone bodies to death, but to save souls to life. Secondly: *He discharges her with a merciful admonition.* "Go, and sin no more." An expression implying—(1) That she had sinned. Adultery is a terrible moral crime. (2) That He forgave her her sin. "Go, and sin no more." (3) That her future should be free from sin. "Go, and sin no more." Let bygones be bygones. Let oblivion cover thy past, and virtue crown thy future. "Go, and sin no more." This is how Christ deals with sinners. He is the sinner's friend. Desolate, branded, forsaken of all, He *alone* will stand by thee.

## A SAD SIGHT.

"And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding."—Prov. vii. 7.

HERE is a sad sight. "Understanding," or reason, is the glory of human nature. It is "the candle of the Lord," to light us on our destiny. Where this is not, you have a traveller on a devious path without light; a vessel on a treacherous sea without rudder or compass. Who is the young man void of understanding? First: *He is one who pays more attention to his outward appearance than to his inner character.* He spends more time at his toilet than with books. His grand effort is not to train his faculties in knowledge and goodness, but to have a fine presence and gentlemanly deportment, to make an impression by his person. This is sad, for it is folly; it is sacrificing the jewel for the casket. Secondly: *He is one who seeks happiness without rather than within.* He looks for pleasure, not in the contemplation of elevating subjects, and in the harmonious flow of holy sympathies, but in the gratification of his sensual nature. The tavern, the saloon, the ball-room, are where he seeks his heaven. This is a sad sight. Such a young man is "void of understanding."

For all true happiness must spring from within. The well of true joy must be found in the heart, or nowhere. Thirdly: *He is one who identifies greatness with circumstances, rather than with character.* To wardrobes, office, rank, wealth, he looks for greatness, rather than to the cultivation of a noble character, by diligent study and virtuous deeds. He who acts thus is "void of understanding." True greatness is in the soul, nowhere else. Fourthly: *He is one who is guided more by the dictates of his own nature than by the counsels of experience.* He acts from the suggestions of his own immature judgment. To attend to the counsels of his seniors, his parents, and those who are farther advanced in the path of life, he proudly deems beneath his dignity. The lessons of the past are nothing to him. The Bible of experience has no verse worthy of his notice. He is his own master. He will be taught by no one, not he. He who acts thus, is "void of understanding," and acts a lamentable part. Fifthly: *He is one who lives in show and ignores realities.* He who lives in those pursuits and pleasures which are in vogue for the hour, and neglects the great realities of the soul and eternity, is "void of understanding." And how

lamentable a sight is this: the sight of a young man living and acting thus without understanding, a young man thus forming a wretched character for manhood and age—a young man the hope of the future. Solomon intimates that he only saw one of this class amongst many. In this age, alas, they abound. They crowd almost every street, appear in every circle, throng our places of public resort. Thoughtful men who love their country feel solemn at the sight.

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#### GRACE AND TRUTH.

"Full of grace and truth."—John i. 14.

THE word "grace," I take as standing for all that is genial, generous, and loving in temper; and the word "truth," as representing all that is substantial, real, and enduring in thought, habit, and life. The former is opposed to all that is cold, selfish, and malign; the latter, to all that is hollow, fictitious, and ephemeral. They are two sides, or sections, of the same thing; and that thing, *moral goodness*, the perfection of God, and the glory and happiness of His intelligent creation. Two remarks are suggested concerning this "grace and truth."

I. They are DEFICIENT in man, and this is man's ruin. First: Their deficiency is *unnatural*. Man's soul is formed for "grace and truth." These are its *native* atmosphere, no other air will suit its life; its native orbit, in no other sphere will its faculties thrive and move harmoniously. Hence the soul in their absence declines in health, is pained with remorse, and groans under a terrible sense of emptiness. Secondly: Their deficiency is *universal*. This is too astoundingly evident to require argument or illustration. *Selfishness* and *falsehood*, their moral opposites, reign supreme in all unregenerate souls. Thirdly: Their deficiency is *disastrous*. Their absence gives room for, and facilitates the growth of, every evil thought and passion. The spirit in which "grace and truth" are not cultivated, becomes like the sluggard's vineyard, overgrown with thorns, and nettles, and noxious things. It runs into a wilderness of evils. There is not a wrong institution, a corrupt system, a criminal act, that are not modifications of that *selfishness* and *falsehood* which pervade all souls that are destitute of "grace and truth." Another remark suggested concerning "grace and truth" is—

II. They are ABUNDANT in Christ, and this is man's hope. He is *full* of "grace and truth." He overflows with those very blessings which fallen men most *urgently* require. There, is an *empty* world; here, is a *full* Christ. He has sufficient "grace and truth" in Him, to fill up every graceless and untruthful soul. First: He is *full of "grace."* All that is generous, loving, compassionate, forgiving, fills Him to an overflow, and it streams from Him in every look, expression, and movement. (1) He is "full of grace," notwithstanding His *immense provocations*. Provocations soon exhaust all the kindness in our nature, or rather soon turn it to wrath. What provocations Christ received! Contemplate the treatment He met with from the men of His age; yet after human enmity had done its worst, He sends offers of mercy to His murderers at Jerusalem. (2) He is "full of grace," notwithstanding His *immense communications*. What millions has He enriched with His grace! Out of His fulness, innumerable multitudes have received *grace upon grace*; yet the fountain in Him is unexhausted, and as "full" as ever. Secondly: He is *full of "truth."* What is truth? Complete *relative* truth is *conformity of life to*

*absolute reality.* Truth in thought, is conformity to eternal fact; truth in life, conformity to eternal law. Christ was *full* of this "truth." His thoughts about God and His universe; man, his constitution and condition, his duty and destiny, are in exact agreement with eternal reality. His life in every part was in exquisite harmony with absolute and eternal rectitude. He was "*The Truth.*" He is the only perfect teacher the world has ever had. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son *alone* hath declared him."

Brother, our duty and our interests agree, and are alike obvious. We need "grace and truth" to expel the demons of selfishness and falsehood, and there is only one being in the universe that can supply our need, and that is CHRIST. He is "*full* of grace and truth." "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of *eternal life.*"

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#### HUMAN REDEMPTION.

"The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."—Isaiah liii. 10.

I. HUMAN REDEMPTION IS A PLEASURE TO THE ALMIGHTY. It is the "pleasure of the Lord." It is not a mere

work of intellect, it is a work of the heart. It is "His good pleasure." It is *the highest qualification of His benevolence.* It is benevolence in restoring the rebellious to order, the sinful to holiness, the miserable to blessedness. What is most pleasing to a being always—(1) Engages most of his thoughts; and (2) Enlists most of his energies.

II. HUMAN REDEMPTION IS ENTRUSTED TO CHRIST. It shall "prosper in *his* hands." He has undertaken the work. Redemption is the *grand* work to which Christ gives himself. Four things are necessary to qualify a being to succeed in any undertaking. (1) He should enter on it from a deep sympathy with it. We persevere most in the work we most love. (2) He should foresee all the difficulties that are destined to occur. When difficulties arise which we never anticipated, we often get baffled and disheartened. (3) He should have power equal to all the emergencies of the case. (4) He should have sufficient time for its accomplishment. Death often prevents us from finishing our work. Christ has all these qualifications.

III. HUMAN REDEMPTION IS DESTINED TO SUCCEED. It "*shall prosper.*" The two

former leading remarks supply an argument for the *certainty* of its accomplishment. (1) It "shall prosper," therefore do not be perplexed by the dispensations of Providence. The result of all the outcome of the chaos will be glorious. (2) It "shall prosper," therefore do not be discouraged in your Christian labors. Your cause cannot fail. In the Lord's work you cannot labor in vain.

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#### THE ISSUES OF LIFE.

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."—Gal. vi. 7, 8.

HERE we are in the presence of a great principle: *actions must develop corresponding results!* Man cannot alter, injure, or evade this law; he is within its sweep, subject to its operation. With a calm clear eye the apostle penetrates the future, and sees at the end of every man's life momentous results. Let us look at some of the stages leading to these results.

I. NO REAPING WITHOUT SOWING. Human life is spent to make a human character. The good man's actions, however filled he may be by the

Holy Ghost, are his own and not God's. The bad man's actions are his own and not the devil's. Every thought, word, action, has in it the energy of immortality. Men scatter them, and vainly dream that they will see them no more; but they will return. All the life of the sinner will roll in upon him, and become the burden which he must ever bear; the life of the Christian will return to Him with joy, and not with grief. The harvest will correspond with the sowing—First: *In kind*. "I have seen," says Eliphaz, "they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same." (Job iv. 8.) Secondly: *In measure*. "He that soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly." "These (the hypocrites) shall receive greater damnation."

II. NO SOWING WITHOUT CHOOSING. The husbandman takes into account the seed, the soil, the season, and the probable demand. He makes up his mind, and sows. The range of his choice may be limited, the value of his decision may be comparatively unimportant; but not so here. A man by his follies and crimes can increase the disturbing powers of darkness on earth and in hell; and by his manly behaviour, the



Christian can send a thrill of delight through the entire hosts of heaven, well-pleasing to God. Earth is the choosing ground, time the choosing period. Pass the boundary, and there is the "great gulf fixed." Now, man may think, ponder, calculate, weigh, and choose; then, "he that is unjust," &c.

III. NO CHOOSING WITHOUT A DIFFERENCE. Choosing, is taking sides. If I pass to the left, I leave the right; for no man can serve two masters. In religious husbandry, alas! the hoe, the rake, the top-dressing of opinion and prejudice, suffice for many; while the sub-soil plough of principle is used by too few. Sect may come nearer sect, because they are separated only by pride or prejudice; but Christ cannot come nearer Satan, because they are separated by everlasting principles. Time binds up many a wound with his balmy fingers; but *these* can never be bound together. Let the true preacher, then, like Moses, set before the people

"life and death, blessing and cursing." Like Elijah, let him boldly challenge, "If the LORD be GOD, follow him; but if *Baal*, then follow him."

IV. NO DIFFERENCE WITHOUT A SAVIOUR. "Who maketh thee to differ from another." Oh, Christian! who came to thee in the prison of thy lusts, and opened the door? Who threw light upon thy path, and showed thee thy danger? Who tracked thy steps when a fugitive, and brought thee back? Who pitched thy aims so high? Who gave thee motives so pure and so powerful? principles of character so radical and lasting? hopes so bright and unblushing? I know thy ready answer. CHRIST!

"His love's a refuge ever nigh;  
His watchfulness a mountain high;  
His name's a rock, which winds above  
And waves below can never move.

"His covenant for ever sure,  
For endless ages will endure;  
His perfect work will ever prove  
The depth of His unchanging love.

"While all things change, He changes  
not;  
He ne'er forgets, though oft forgot;  
His love unchangeably the same,  
And as enduring as His name."

H. T. M.

*Liverpool.*



# The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

## SOCIALISM OF THE UNIVERSE.

The social principle is the soul of the material universe. You cannot go into the meadows, and pluck up a single daisy by the roots without breaking up a society of nice relations, and detecting a principle which sustains the same relation to gravitation, as the nervous system does to the veins and arteries of the human body. The handful of earth that follows the tiny roots of the little flower, is replete with social elements. A little social circle had been formed around that germinating daisy. The sunbeam and the dewdrop met there, and the soft summer breeze came whispering through the tall grass to join the silent concert, and the earths took them to their bosom, and introduced them to that daisy germ, and they all went to work to shew that flower to the sun. Each mingled in the honey of its influence, and they nursed the "wee canny thing" with an aliment that made it grow, and when it lifted its eyes towards the sky, they wove a soft carpet of grass for its feet. And the sun saw it through the green leaves, and smiled as he passed on, and then by star-light, and by moon-light, they worked on, and the daisy lifted up its head, and one morning while the sun was looking upon the dews it put on its silver rimmed diadem, and shewed its yellow petals to the stars. And it nodded to the little birds that were swimming in the sky, and all of them that had silver-lined wings came, and the birds in black, and gray, and quaker brown came, and the querulous blue bird, and the curtesying yellow bird came and each sung a native air at the coronation of that

daisy. Every thing that sung or shone upon that "wee modest flower," was a member of that social circle, and conspired to its harmony and added to its music, Heaven, earth, sky and sea were its companions; the sun and stars walked hand in hand with it, as kindly as if they never saw another daisy, or had another companion. The sober ocean, even the distant Pacific, laded the fleet-winged clouds with sweet-savoured dews to brighten its countenance when the sun appeared. Such was the social circle which you broke up, when you put forth your hand to pluck "the little canny thing amang the stour."

Now all the members of this social circle were necessary to the well-being of that daisy. It needed the sun-beam, the dewdrop, and rain-drop, and the soft summer breeze to develop its character and unfold its beauties—it needed the morning song of the birds and the chirping lay of the meadow's stream to keep time by, as it waved its silver diadem to the twittering swallow's wing.

If, then, my young friends, our Heavenly Father has provided such companions, and social influences for the lily or the daisy, what provision has He not made for the society of His children.

Whatever may be your destiny in this world or that to come, you never will be left alone. . . . Remember that you are not now *only* forming a character, but choosing companions for eternity.

You must be the centre of a little solar system, in which your companions, like the sun-illuminated planets, shall move in the reflection of your light. — *Extract from "Sparks from the Anvil," by ELIHU BURRITT.*

# Literary Notices.

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[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books ; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

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## THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,  
Since none can compass more than they intend.

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**THE GENIUS OF THE GOSPEL: A Homiletic Commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew.** By DAVID THOMAS, D.D., Minister of Stockwell Chapel, London, Editor of the "Homilist," Compiler of the "Biblical Liturgy," &c., &c. Edited by REV. WILLIAM WEBSTER, M.A., late Fellow of Queen's College, Joint-Editor of "Webster and Wilkinson's Greek Testament," &c. London: Jackson, Walford, & Hodder.

THE author in his preface says, "My belief is, that the best method for chasing away the clouds of scepticism that hang over the Book of God is, not to employ our powers in describing and dencuncing them, but to bring forth—by an honest interpretation and philosophic analysis—the Divine beams of light that lie in the sacred text. It is not our little logic or learning, but God's own light, that must sweep the soul's firmament of its clouds of erroneous thought. This work is made up, for the most part, of the substance of discourses, first spoken from the pulpit, and afterwards published in the 'Homilist' from month to month, extending over a period of well-nigh fourteen years. This will account for, and, I hope, justify, the popular mould in which they are cast, their freedom from philological criticism, and the degrees of merit by which they are distinguished. They are full or sketchy, discursive or condensed, according to the time at my disposal when I wrote; elaborate or analytic, vivacious or otherwise, according to my mood at the hour in which the thoughts took their rise, shaped their form, and gave their expression. To have given the work a greater show of learning by a free use of Greek type, verbal criticisms, quotations from the Fathers, and references to the rare thinkers of olden times and the ripest scholars of my own age, would have been easy; but this, whilst it might have given the glitter of scholarship to my efforts, would, at the same time, have added to the work—already too bulky—a weight to sink it into the ever-widening grave of verbose productions."

The Editor, Mr. Webster, finds three striking features in the discourses,

upon which he makes a few remarks, viz., *Reality, Common Sense, Fidelity*. He says, "There is a reality in this volume equally remote from that sacramentalism, and that sentimentalism, which have nothing in common save their want of reality, and their blighting influence on pure and undefiled religion. We may say of the author, *Nil falsi audet, nil veri non audet diceri*. On every topic he says neither more nor less than what he feels. Much of the preaching of the present day is ineffectual because it is unreal. The preacher represents the hopes and fears of a Christian, the joys and sorrows of religion, not in language drawn from his own experience or his own convictions, but in terms which he has borrowed from other men. That which was perfectly just, natural, and real, when originally indited, is strange, simulated, and unnatural, when retailed. Nothing of this kind can be found in this volume. The author speaks only what he knows, and testifies that only of which he is assured.

"Another feature in these discourses is, the good *common sense* which they evince in a remarkable freedom from the morbid dread of legality. Many of those who are attached to the doctrines of grace—and I can hardly think it possible for a man to be really a minister of Christ Jesus, who is not so attached—betray such a jealousy for evangelical teaching, that they pay small attention to what is practical. They consider spirituality to rise so far above morality, that they throw into the shade the didactic and preceptive teaching of Scripture. He who would make full proof of his ministry must make up his mind to be accounted a moralist and a legalist. It has recently been said that there are in every congregation four classes who need special admonitions, which they do not receive—the dishonest, the unclean, the covetous, the assenters—those who hang about the doors of the ark, but who never enter in. It is nearly forty years ago since Isaac Taylor, in his 'Natural History of Euthusiasm,' called attention to those who lived on better terms with angels and seraphs than with their children, servants, and neighbours. How are we to account for this state of things? My answer is, a morbid dread of legality, and a mistaken jealousy for the doctrines of grace.

"A third feature in these discourses is, their *fidelity*—the high-souled indifference to human censure or human applause. We may trace in the writer the features of an Ezekiel—'Thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear;' or the lineaments of an Isaiah—'Cry out, spare not; shew my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sin.' Many popular preachers see no iniquity in those to whom they minister; they discern no transgression in the people of their charge. How miserable the minister who purchases popularity by dwelling on the faults of the absent, by delivering eloquent harangues against all the errors and heresies which can be found in Christendom, while he deals tenderly

with the faults of his hearers, and treats slightly the sore of his own congregation!

"In reading over these discourses as they passed through the press, there are many passages upon which I paused with the view of drawing attention to their peculiar merits. These became so numerous, that I altogether forbear, lest I should extend this introduction to an inconvenient length. I shall heartily rejoice if this volume finds its way into the hands of those who usually restrict their readings to writers of their own branch of the Church Universal, believing that its perusal will assist the growth of truth and peace. I can heartily recommend it to all my clerical brethren who would adapt their preaching to meet the errors of the present day; to all, whether ministers or laymen, who wish to add to their store of knowledge. May they go forward in their toil, giving similar proof with the author, that they are 'workmen who need not be ashamed; speaking out with all boldness, under the guidance of the Spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.'"

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A FULL REVIEW AND EXPOSURE OF BISHOP COLENSO'S PROFANE FICTIONS AND FALLACIES, IN PART II. OF HIS WORK. By HON. JUDGE MARSHALL, of Nova Scotia. London: Wm. Freeman.

It is well known that Bishop Colenso's attack on the received notions on the early books of the Old Testament, has called forth a host of answers. Amongst these the present work holds a respectable place. Yet we are far from agreeing with all that is advanced, or sympathizing with his apparently extreme aversion to criticism and the disturbance of old opinions. Doubtless much that the Bishop has written is characterized by rashness and some of it even profaneness. Yet that should not induce us to reject the well-considered conclusions of modern scholarship. It would be an evil result indeed of the controversy if it made us afraid of free investigation, or identified orthodoxy with obstinacy. Thirty years ago, before Colenso was heard of, some of his opinions were held by certain of the soundest Churchmen and the most learned Dissenters, and were openly expounded in organs whose reputation was unquestioned. It was then not considered a heresy to believe that the earlier part of Genesis was edited, rather than written, by Moses, that there were two accounts of the creation, and that Elohim or God was used for the Deity in the one and Jehovah in the other. It were much to be wished that an end could be put for the present to all this Colenso literature, in trust that ere long a man would appear, thoroughly qualified by profound learning, comprehensive thought and sober piety, for the task of discriminating what is good from what is evil in the statements and spirit of the African Bishop, and setting the whole question in the light of truth.



THE COMPLETE WORKS OF STEPHEN CHARNOCK, B.D. With Introduction by REV. JAMES M'COSE, LL.D. Vol. I. Containing Discourses on Divine Things, and the Existence and Attributes of God. Edinburgh : James Nichol.

THIS is one of the volumes of Nichol's *Series of Standard Divines*, others of which have been often noticed in our pages. Stephen Charnock studied at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and as might be expected, turned out a Puritan. He settled at Dublin, but was ejected by the Act of Uniformity. The Treatise on the Attributes, contained in the present volume, is his principal work, and though disfigured by the usual faults of the age and the school of Charnock, has considerable merits. Dr. M'Cosh has done his best with very scanty materials for a memoir. He has also prefixed two masterly Essays on Puritan Preaching, and on the Philosophical Principles involved in the Puritan Theology.

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SACRED SCENES; or, NOTES OF TRAVEL IN EGYPT AND THE HOLY LAND. BY REV. F. FERGUSON, M.A. Glasgow : Thomas Adamson.

THERE is very much in this book which will interest the multitude. It of course contains descriptions of the scenes of chief importance; and these are intersperst with a great variety of detail of personal adventure, not only in the countries mentioned in the title, but also on the route. As there are so many works on these "Sacred Scenes," it is no mean praise to say that the author has done well to increase the number.

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GOD'S WAY OF HOLINESS. By HORATIUS BONAR, D.D. London : James Nisbet & Co.

THIS is not a logical or a critical treatise, but is intended to be purely practical. It is inevitable that a book of this nature should contain much that is good and true. Yet as Christian life is based on Christian doctrine, we think the author would have succeeded better if he had thoroughly mastered the Scriptural doctrine of holiness before beginning to write about it.

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THE NOVELTIES OF ROMANISM. By CHARLES COLLETTE. London : Religious Tract Society.

THIS work consists of three parts:—Development of Doctrine; Chronological Arrangement; Old and New Creeds Contrasted. In the first the author furnishes a few plain proofs of the novelties of modern Romanism. The second he traces through successive centuries the

development of Papal error, and priestly assumption. And in the third he presents the contrast between the simple Scriptural creed of the primitive Church, and that of Romanism, as it is consolidated in the Council of Trent. The work is a valuable one on the subject which he treats.

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JOHN CALVIN. A Tercentenary Memorial. By ALEXANDER THOMSON, M.A., of Manchester. London: Jackson, Walford, & Hodder.

THIS is a well-written tractate, containing, however, we think, a very exaggerated estimate of the merits of John Calvin. For our own part, we wish that Calvin had never written on "Theology," and that he had displayed a more Christ-like spirit.

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VITAL QUESTIONS. By REV. FREDERICK FOX THOMAS, Torquay. Second Edition. London: Hamilton, Adams, & Co. We are glad to find that this valuable little work has reached a "second edition." We hope we shall soon have to record a third. THE BOOK OF PRAYER FOR THE HOUSE OF PRAYER. London: Wertheim, Macintosh, & Hunt. A little book, on a good subject, written in a narrow spirit. A BOOK FOR WIVES AND MOTHERS. London: Wertheim, Macintosh, & Hunt. Interesting and useful. THE FIRST STEP OF A CLOSER WALK WITH GOD. By CHARLES BOGATSKY. London: Wertheim, Macintosh, & Hunt. Devout but weak. SIN AND SUFFERING RECONCILABLE WITH DIVINE BENEVOLENCE. Four Discourses. By JOSHUA PRIESTLEY. London: Hamilton, Adams, & Co. The title describes this book, which abounds with noble thoughts from the pen of an able and well-known writer. AN APOLOGY FOR THE ADOPTION OF PÆDOBAPTISM. With an Appendix concerning the Possibility of Union between the Congregational and Baptist Denominations. By REV. J. R. S. HARRINGTON, late of the Bristol Baptist College. London: John Snow. Mr. Harrington is a logical thinker, and a diligent and reverent student of Scripture. His Apology is, as far as it goes, a good example of arguing. With the Appendix, we have no concern. PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY. A Discourse addressed to the Ministers and Messengers of the Yorkshire Association of Baptist Churches, met in Portmahon Chapel, Sheffield, May 18th, 1864. By REV. ROBERT HOLMES, Baptist Minister, Rawden. Published by Request. Bradford: H. B. Byles. We see in this pamphlet an honest man and an able thinker struggling against the influence of his system. May he succeed in finding a complete deliverance! TRACTARIAN ERRORS: A Word of Warning. By REV. JOSIAH MILLER, M.A. Second Edition. London: Jackson, Walford, & Hodder. This pamphlet has reached a second edition, and therefore requires neither characterization nor commendation. May the errors he has exposed speedily depart!



# A HOMILY

ON

## The Dignity of Man.

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“Ye are of more value than many sparrows.”—Matt. x. 31.

**I**T was a common practice of our Blessed Lord, when enforcing His lessons of truth and wisdom, to refer for illustration to the works of nature, and God’s providential dealings with the creatures of His hand. Were His hearers doubtful as to the supplies of food for the replenishment of their daily wants? They were referred to *Him*, who—although they were accounted *unclean* in the statutes of the ceremonial law—feedeth the ravens that sow not, nor gather into barns. Were they anxious about obtaining a sufficiency of clothing? He directed their attention to the clothing of the earth, to the beauties of its flowers, to the raiment of the lily of the valley surpassing the kingly robes of Solomon in all his grandeur. Are their souls mistrustful of Providence? Do they look forth with more than proper care towards the future, overweeningly anxious about some cloud of trouble which lowers threateningly in the distant horizon? He asks them, in the words immediately preceding our text, “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.” “Cares God,” it may be asked, “for sparrows?” Yes! the universe around us, in all its living wonderfulness, corroborates these intimations of the LIVING

WORD, and makes it manifest that He who was the *personal* manifestation of Deity on earth, only directed our attention to a truth which His works—those other revelations of Himself—will constantly substantiate. His all-seeing eye is neither baffled by gigantic vastness, nor by infinitesimal minuteness. The number of our hairs elude not His searching ken. Nay ! creatures a thousand times smaller than the thickness of our hairs were called into existence by His fiat, and are fed, and nurtured, and sustained by His providential care. A single drop of the water of our ditches, which has been exposed to the vivifying sunbeams, will often, when examined with a microscope, show us thousands, yea, tens of thousands of creatures, revelling as in an ocean of their own. Each sparkling drop is, as it were, animated with life and enjoyment. Countless millions of creatures which our eyes cannot see, escape not the all-peering vision of the All-seeing One, who caters for their wants, and provides for their necessities. The bloom upon our plums and peaches is composed of living, breathing creatures, too small for our unaided eyes to see their movements, or discern their lineaments. The leaves upon our trees are tenanted and animated. The very refuse which we cast away in disgust, is soon filled to overflowing with varied forms of being and enjoyment. And God careth for these ! Not one of them can open or close its brief existence without the exercise of His power ! Careth He not, then, for sparrows ?

The whole universe is one vast scene of need and of supply, of craving and enjoyment. Visible nature is in every way adapted to the creatures that dwell upon its surface, and they are equally adapted to visible nature. The *wisdom* of the All-benevolent has imparted *wants*, that His bounties might be enjoyed ; and the *hand* of the All-benevolent has in all cases supplied those wants. Every creature, too, is adapted to the existence of all others, so that there is no hiatus in the chain of life, no gap to be filled up ; while every creature is *as* adapted and suited to its own peculiar sphere of being and enjoyment, as though in its existence all the Divine purposes

were fully answered and compassed, as though the stable earth, the yielding air, and the sustaining flood, were created for *its* use and pleasure alone. Thus God careth for *all*. Careth He not, then, for sparrows?

But “ye are of more value than many sparrows.” The all-sustaining, all-directing hand, that—

“Ever busy, wheels the silent spheres;  
Works in the secret deep; shoots steaming, thence,  
The fair profusion that o’erspreads the fields;  
And guides the wheels of nature in their course”—

Has provided in a peculiar manner for you. He has given you not only greater capacities for enjoyment, but also the means of answering those capacities, and fulfilling every proper and right desire—instincts and affections craving for external objects, and external objects on which they may lavish themselves, and not in vain. All the great purposes of life are answered by the implanting and gratification of impulses, so that in seeking his own enjoyment—under proper moral control—man is doing the will, and fulfilling the purposes of God.

Nor is this the only respect in which—as evidenced by our original condition as creatures—we “are of more value than many sparrows.” Our enjoyments are not only greater, they are also more varied. Besides those animal appetites and impulsive propensities which he shares in common with other creatures, man has other endowments—gifts of overflowing wisdom and benevolence. He has intellectual capacities—æsthetic sentiments, delighting in the beautiful—and moral powers, distinguishing between right and wrong, and delighting, *for its own sake*, in that which is good and virtuous. With the grasp of his mighty intellect he surveys his own world, and others which lie beyond it in the outspread regions of infinitude. He examines the laws of nature, and gratifies his mind with a thousand discoveries of the fitness of things. The objective and the subjective, the outward universe and the inward desire and longing are so exactly adapted to each other. He has irrepressible desires for



calculation, and objects innumerable on which to exercise, in the way of distance, size, and number, those arithmetical propensities. He has a love of generalization and comparison, and objects without number on which he can exercise those faculties, arranging, classing, dividing, and sub-dividing to his heart's content, until what once appeared mere multitudinous profusion, becomes under his power of arrangement (as it ever was in the view of the Creator) a continuous chain of organisms, in which each animal and vegetable creature is not only a distinct, but an orderly and necessary link. He has an innate desire of investigating cause and effect, and an outward universe, governed by unfailing and salutary laws, whose sequences are constant and almost unvarying, in which cause and effect may ever, with advantage, be seen and studied. He has an innate love of the beautiful, and everything around him to gratify those feelings. The varied forms of nature, the blending of colors, the harmonies of sound, all contribute to form for him inexhaustible sources of delight. Hill and valley, plain and woodland, mountain and ravine, the roaring cataract, the swelling sea, the gently-flowing river, all contribute to his gratification and pleasure. The starry heavens—

“That alphabet of immensity  
By which we read, in dazzling light,  
The lofty name of the Infinite”—

The flowers of earth, that, starlike seem almost reflections of their beams, these and a thousand other things, all are calculated to exercise that faculty in a measure inexhaustible, and to improve and soften, as well as gratify, the mind that gives full play to its exercise; and, above all, the mutual adaptation between the mind and the outward universe in which it is placed, indisputably shows that in the regards of Omniscience and Omnipotence, which has exercised such care over our mental constitution, *we “are of more value than many sparrows.”*

But man's moral powers distinguish him, above all these, from the inferior and instinctive tribes. His soul, which

once, as an unbroken mirror, reflected back the image of his God in which he was created, even now, though broken and shattered by the fall, catches, in its scattered but brilliant fragments, some portions of that image, and reflects them in unsullied beauty. We have an innate love of justice, truth, and goodness, although we are so corrupted by our lapse from original rectitude, that we seldom pursue them with unwavering and unvarying steps. The eyes even of the wicked and debased will fill with tears at a narrative of the sufferings of self-devoted and disinterested love. We admire truth when we do not practise it. We value justice in the abstract when our own dealings are unjust. We set up a standard of virtue, and profess to regard it almost with worship, while we dally with vice and wantonness, and offer *them* the first-fruits of our gains and toil. And does not the possession of these powers, though they are so little exercised—powers which no other creatures *do* possess—still further show that in the regards of our Creator, we “*are of more value than many sparrows?*”

And yet there is one other characteristic in which man differs still more from the irrational and instinctive creature—that liberty of choice and liberty of action which makes him more *like* God, and at the same time responsible *to* God.

The sparrow has no power of choice, but in all its doings acts in accordance with an irresistible impression, conveyed, most probably, through the medium of the brain. It builds its nest, indeed, in accordance with the strictest forms of architectural beauty, and with a skill which may well be regarded as perfection. It builds it, too, with every apparent regard to utility and adaptation, so exactly suited is it to the purposes for which it is intended. Yet it has no power of choice. It could not do otherwise. The skill and the knowledge exhibited are not its own; for every sparrow of the same species, though it has had no opportunity of instruction from its parents, since the home of its infancy was built before the egg, from which it proceeded, was laid, builds in exactly the same manner, and there has been no alteration or

improvement since its first parents came originally from the hand of their Creator.

The sparrow *seems*, also, to possess a knowledge of the principles of physiology in the selection of its food and medicine, for here, too, it always takes the right ; and even when man attempts deception will often reject that which it usually feeds upon because it is poisoned. But here, too, it has no choice. It could not do otherwise. The wisdom it exhibits is not its own, for it is not the result of experience ; nor are its conclusions arrived at by any reasoning process. The knowledge is *implanted*. It was received direct from Him without whose permissive will none of them could fall to the ground.

Man's acts are *not* thus the result of indefinable impression. They are the result of choice, guided by the carnal, mental, or spiritual appetite, and controlled by the exercise of reason. He does not know by intuitive or irresistible impression what is his proper food or medicine. He has to gain that knowledge from experiment and experience, and often by bitter and even fatal experience he *does* attain it. But he has a power of *recording*, and thus of storing facts and experiences ; and thus by the exercise of the rational faculty, his liberty of choice is guided. Impressed, perhaps, to some extent, instinctively, or else *more* directly taught by God the necessity of providing himself with shelter and protection, he has ever made himself *some* description of clothing and dwelling-place ; but with his liberty of choice and capacity of improvement he has changed the skins of wild beasts, or the sewn and interwoven leaves of trees into apparel neat, elegant, or sumptuous, and exchanged the simple tent, and the rude hut or wigwam, for the elegant dwelling or the gorgeous palace, in which every style of architectural beauty feasts the eye and gratifies the mind. Truly, then, "*Ye are of more value than many sparrows.*"

But, alas ! there is another side of this picture. There is something else involved in this faculty of choosing between right and wrong. Truly man *can* look forth as a god, upon the universe ; mould matter to his will ; form out of inert or

unresisting materials, tools and appliances to accomplish his purposes and designs ; and, as he sees all *other* things controlled by unchanging laws or guided by irresistible impulses, can exclaim, with something approaching the freedom of a Deity, (*created* in the glorious image of his God), "I have the power of *choice*, and am not bound up in the necessities of nature." Yet that power is an awful as well as a glorious one. While he was contented to know *only good*, all things worked well ; but when our first parents, under the temptation of Satan, aspired to be more essentially as Gods, to know *good and evil*, how was the scene changed ! Alas, the sparrow never rebels against the laws of its being ; it never resists the guiding impressions of its creator. There is no jarring, no deviation from right, no rebellion against nature's laws in any of its actions. But man, gifted with the liberty of choice, has *chosen* to do evil, though warned that its consequences would be fatal ; has *chosen* to rebel against the Fountain Source of liberty from whom his own freedom was derived ; has *chosen* recklessly to break the essentially righteous laws of that God, who gave him life and all that constitutes life a blessing. The abuse of liberty has proved his ruin. The image of God, broken, defaced, trampled in the dust, smeared over with the foul slime of sin, seems rather like the image of the wicked one. Many debased, degraded, and polluted, seek their enjoyment only in iniquity. Others of a higher character seek their enjoyment in pleasures more refined, or in amassing wealth or pursuing the vain dreams of ambition : but alike with the former class are regardless of God or give Him but the refuse of their time. And if there be some who profess to worship Him and honor Him, what is *their* return to Him compared with what is required by the great moral law of creation, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind ?" Alas, the broken bits of service that the best of us can offer Him are nothing in comparison with what that law requires. And can it still be said of such ungrateful and rebellious creatures as we are—" *Ye are of more value than many sparrows ?* "

Let God's doings declare the estimate *He* forms of that

value. In the lowest depth of man's abasement the cry was heard in heaven—"Save them from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom." He *bore*, from the first, with their iniquities and ingratitude, and loaded them in return with the daily blessings of His providence. He *promised*, as soon as they had fallen from righteousness, that a means of restoration should be provided. He *taught*, in plain verbal terms, and also, in order that a deeper and more lasting impression might be made, He taught by means of ceremonial rites and observances, the great truths of their innate impurity, and the necessity of cleansing and restoration, to fit them for a more exalted state of being. He *exhorted*, by means of His teachers and prophets, His lapsed creatures to return from the ways of evil to the path of rectitude, to repent of and forsake their sins, and turn unto Him with full purpose of heart, that consistently with the immutable laws of morality, He might have mercy upon them. And when all this failed, He *gave* the most precious gift which the whole universe could furnish, as a ransom for the creature who had thus wandered from His love. Who shall declare the unutterable fulness of that love which quenched the light of the empyrean for the redemption of the lost? A God, a present God, has stooped to make the sin-stained earth His dwelling-place, that His pure footsteps might efface the stains. The Creator has stooped to the limits of creatureship. The unfathomable ocean of eternity is poured into the narrow channel of time. The Source of all the happiness and enjoyment in the universe drops tears of agony over human woe; yea, bathes man's dwelling-place with His bloody tears and bloody perspirations. Purity unites itself to corruption, life marries itself with death, that death and corruption alike might be destroyed.

"Oh Love Divine!

O, miracle of Love! O, Love of God!  
 Had universal nature backward slunk  
 Into the barren womb of nothingness,  
 Had light turned darkness, matter chaos wild,  
 And order rank confusion, it were nought  
 To that stupendous scene where God in flesh  
 Died for the creature's sin."



That, believing in the love thus exhibited, that creature might be drawn back to the righteousness he had forsaken, and be led to *choose* the good and refuse the evil. Truly, then, in God's estimate, my brethren, "*Ye are of more value than many sparrows.*"

Needs the truth yet further illustration by way of full enforcement? Take it from man's immortal destiny. Look over that yawning precipice into the dark and terrible abyss beneath. There, the blackness of darkness reigns—a darkness that truly may be felt; but there ascends up from its deep, bottomless gulfs, a smell of brimstone and of fire. Listen! there is a sound of wailing and of wretchedness; yea, of weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. These are the regions of unutterable despair, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." And ever and anon, amid the cries of pain and groans of torture, there fall upon the ear the echoes of a word, pronounced in tones that seem like a quintessence wrung from the very dregs of agony—"For Ever."

Leave now that fearful scene, and gaze upward through the irradiated sky. Pass in imagination through the pearly gates into the golden city of the New Jerusalem. There, all is joy unclouded, happiness undimmed, felicity unchanging. There, in contemplation of the glorious works and providence of God, the children of the resurrection find a bliss unceasing. His presence is their light, His Spirit their immutable sustainer, His wisdom and His love the theme of their continual and ecstatic songs; and if there be one thought embodied into words which adds a joy to their joy, a light to their light, a glory to their glory, it is *that same thought* which wrings from despairing eyes the scalding tear-drops of the damned—the thought that they have attained an unchanging condition which will last "*for ever.*" What is the value of a soul so gifted?

Brethren, the power of *choice*, the highest creature-gift a Godhead could bestow, is *yours*. But your *destiny* is immortality. Over that you have no choice. You *must* exist for

ever, and one of these two conditions must be that of each of you hereafter. Oh ! wake then, I beseech you, to your responsibility in the exercise of this glorious—but awful—gift of liberty of action, as now—once more—I call to your attention the words of Him who spake as never other man spake—“ *Ye are of more value than many sparrows.*”

REV. THOMAS RAGG, M.A., *Author of “Creation’s Testimony to its God.”*

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## A Homiletic Glance at the Acts of the Apostles.

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Able expositions of the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, describing the manners, customs, and localities described by the inspired writers ; also interpreting their words, and harmonizing their formal discrepancies, are, happily, not wanting amongst us. But the eduction of its WIDEST truths and highest suggestions is still a felt desideratum. To some attempt at the work we devote these pages. We gratefully avail ourselves all exegetical helps within our reach ; but to occupy our limited space with any lengthened archaeological, geographical, or philological remarks, would be to miss our aim ; which is not to make bare the mechanical process of the study of Scripture, but to reveal its spiritual results.

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### SECTION FOURTEENTH.—Acts v. 17—32.

“Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told, saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors : but when we had opened, we found no man within. Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow. Then came one and told

them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people. Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them. Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."—Acts v. 17—32.

SUBJECT :—*The Activity and Bafflement of Persecutors.*

THE subject of our last section was the "Phases of the Young Church." We looked upon it as the organ of restorative power, and as an institution differently affecting different men. In some it produced a revulsion, in some it awakened admiration, and in some it effected conversion. Such various effects the Church in all ages has produced. It has never been uniform in its influence upon external society. It is a characteristic of moral forces, that their results are seldom uniform. The verses now under notice, lead us to consider *the arrest and imprisonment of the apostles, their deliverance and commission, and their arraignment and defence.*

I. THEIR ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT. "Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison." This new attack upon the Church, the language teaches, was not only preceded, but occasioned by the things described in verses 12—16. It was not only after the disciples were so multiplied and the people so impressed by the miracles, but for that very reason, that this new persecution arose. The apostles' success fanned into furious flame the

indignation of their persecutors. Our success always makes the hell of envy burn hotter in the breast of our enemies. The "high priest" is particularly mentioned as the leader of this new assault, and the Sadducees are mentioned as following. The words do not teach that the "high priest" was a Sadducee, but that the Sadducees sympathized and moved with him in this attack. The Sadducees were one with Annas and Caiaphas, who were Pharisees, in their antagonism to the new religion. Two things are to be observed—

First : *The feeling of the persecutors.* What was the feeling that moved them to this attack? "Indignation." High Priest and Sadducees and all were filled with this. The Greek word does not necessarily mean a malignant passion but a strong affection either of love or anger. Here, of course, it means the latter feeling; it is malignity. The success of Peter and his associates inflamed with indignation all the factions in the great council of the nation, all hearts throbbed with the same passion, and answered to the same persecuting call. The other thing to be observed here, is—

Secondly : *The conduct of the persecutors.* They "laid their hands on the apostles." That is, they caused them to be arrested. Not only Peter and John, but most probably the twelve. They were stopped in their work, and taken into custody, and they were put in the "common prison." The word *common*, means nothing more than *public*, and does not necessarily convey the idea of degradation; still, a public prison is of all social scenes the most revolting and disreputable. Into this hideous and degrading cell, where the worst of characters were incarcerated, these twelve Apostles were confined. Thus, as ever, bigotry shows the weakness of its opinions, and the malignity of its aims, by substituting force for argument, might for right.

The words lead us to consider—

## II. THEIR DELIVERANCE AND COMMISSION.

First : *Their deliverance.* "But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth."

On a former occasion they were delivered from prison (chap iv. 21) by the timid and apprehensive policy of their oppressors. Here, they are delivered by a direct messenger from heaven. An "angel of the Lord." The definite article before "angel," is not in the original. All that is expressed, therefore, is that some angel or messenger from heaven came in the stillness of the night and liberated these apostles of the new faith. Prison walls, iron gates, and massive chains, are nothing to the touch of an angel. This miraculous rescue was adapted to rebuke their persecutors, and to rouse amongst the people the strongest emotions of reverence and of wonder. Observe—

Secondly : *Their commission.* The angel who miraculously wrought their deliverance, gave them this commission :—"Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." Observe—(1) The *subject* of this commission. "The words of this life." A summary and sublime description this, of the whole Gospel—"The words of this life." The Gospel is a record of words that generate, nurture, develop, and perfect, the true life of humanity. (2) The *scene* of this commission. "In the temple." "Go, stand and speak in the temple." Go to the place where the people assemble in largest concourse, the most public of all public places, and where old prejudice will rouse the strongest opposition, and there stand and speak "all the words of this life." The commission is to preach not a partial, but a whole Gospel—not a few words, but "*all* ;" and not to any particular class of men, but to the whole body of the people assembled in the most public place. (3) The *execution* of the commission. "And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught." They were not disobedient to the heavenly vision. They "conferred not with flesh and blood," but set themselves at once to work out the angelic behest, "*early in the morning.*" As the first grey beams of the opening day fell on Moriah's brow, and as the people began to assemble, they were there to meet them. The commission they received in the night, when the



angel brought them forth, led them to watch the first dawn of the morning with new interest, in order to fulfil the heavenly injunction. They were delivered from prison for this purpose. They were not brought forth from the cell in order that they might retire to solitude or to rest, but that they might preach the Gospel.

Now, we find, that the *deliverance* and the *commission* of these apostles had a three-fold effect upon their enemies—*confounded them with disappointment, startled them with surprise, and filled them with apprehension.* (1) *It confounded them with disappointment.* “But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told, saying, the prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors : but when we had opened, we found no man within.” Here was the disappointment of the whole Sanhedrim. The previous night they had committed the apostles, as they supposed, to safe custody, intending to have them arraigned in their presence, in order to make out such a charge as would legally terminate their ministry. The plans of this august assembly were formed, and their dread determinations, perhaps, fixed. The morning comes. They meet, in all the ceremony of office. The first thing they do is to despatch officers to the prison in order to conduct the culprits to their bar. They wait. The officers return ; but they have no prisoners in their charge. And here is the message delivered to the council :—“The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors : but when we had opened, we found no man within.” What miserable victims of disappointment these magnates must have felt themselves ! What a dark and chilling shadow was thrown upon the dignity of their state, and the pomp of their office ! The wicked work in the dark, and Providence makes them the victims of their own plots. Another effect of the

deliverance and commission of the apostles was—(2) *That it startled their enemies with surprise.* Whilst the Sanhedrim were confounded with disappointment, the subordinate officers must have been terribly surprised when they went to the prison, found the door “shut with all safety,” saw “the keepers standing without before the doors,” all things indicating that the prisoners were safe within, but when they entered the dreary precincts there was not a man to be found. The angel had done no injury to the building, no violence to the gaolers. The whole appeared just as it had done on the previous night. Another effect of the deliverance and commission of the apostles upon their enemies was—(3) *They were filled with apprehension.* “Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.” The council was thrown into the utmost perplexity. “They were,” says Dr. Alexander, “wholly at a loss, and knew not what to think of, or what to expect from them.” The words do not so much express their wonder at what had happened, as their fear at what would be the issue of the whole—the terrible bearing upon themselves. And well might they fear. Their authority was disregarded. Heaven had thwarted their plans by a miracle. The new religion was rapidly advancing, and their efforts to stem the advancing tide were utterly abortive.

The passage leads us to consider—

### III. THEIR ARRAIGNMENT AND DEFENCE.

First: *Their arraignment.* Intelligence comes to the Sanhedrim as to where the apostles were, and as to what they were doing. “Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.” This intelligence would heighten the apprehensions of the council. It was alarming that they should have been delivered from the prison, but still more alarming that they should be found at the work of preaching again. Upon this information, “the captain with

the officers," went forth at once "and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned." Such was the popular regard for the apostles that the men sent to arrest them were afraid, not merely of bodily injury but of being denounced as untrue to the theocracy of the law of Moses—they are now before the Sanhedrim, and the high priest, the president of the court, addresses them in these words, "Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." This language is most significant. It expresses—(1) Their mortification at their disregarded authority, "Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name." They had so commanded them in the strongest and most unequivocal terms. (Acts iv. 17—21.) But the apostles, with a sublime heroism, set their mandates at defiance. This must have wounded their official pride, and filled them with chagrin and vexation. The language expresses—(2) An assumed contempt for the founder of the new faith. They do not mention any of the distinguishing titles of the Messiah. They only say "*this name*"—"this man's blood." Though the suppression of a name may sometimes be reverential, rather than contemptuous, it is evidently not so here. They, in the heat of their indignation, would have the apostles to suppose that His name was unworthy their mention. The contempt, however, I think, was assumed, for their very antagonism shows that they had a deep faith in the mystic grandeur of His character. The language expresses—(3) Their reluctant testimony to the progress of Christianity. "Behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine." A stronger testimony than this to the zeal of the apostles, and to the growth of their cause, could scarcely have been given. It was given by the most intelligent men in Jerusalem—men who knew the prevailing feeling and the general character of the population well—men, too, who would have ignored and denied the fact if they could. Circumstances wrested it from their reluctant lips. Their language expresses—

(4) A foreboding of a terrible retribution ; “and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.” To “bring blood upon the head,” is a peculiar Hebrew idiom ; meaning to make one answer for the murder or the death of another. (Alexander) There was conscience in this. They felt that they were implicated in the horrid crime of the crucifixion of Christ ; and that which they once dared in the fury of their rage, when they cried “let his blood be upon us,” they now deprecated as the direst of judgments.

Secondly : *Their defence.* How did the apostles answer this address of the high priest, who spoke in the name of the Sanhedrim ? Here are their words :—“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things ; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.” In this defence, which Peter, as was his wont, delivers not only for himself but also for his brother apostles, we have several things worthy of note. (1) Here is one of the grandest of principles. “We ought to obey God rather than men.” This principle he had enunciated before. (See notes on chap. iv. 19, 20.) (2) Here is one of the most wonderful of facts. “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus.” This is the great crowning fact of Christianity. It is the corner stone in the great temple of Gospel Truth.\* (3) Here is one of the most appalling of crimes—“Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.” Here he charges, as he had more than once done before, the crime of crucifixion home upon them. What superiority to the fear of man, what inflexible fidelity to truth, what more than human heroism, are exhibited by Peter as he stands before the most august assembly of the land, and charges home upon them the greatest crime ever

\* See “Homily on the Resurrection of Christ,” Third Series, Vol. I., page 19.

perpetrated under Heaven! (4) Here we have the most glorious of communications. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand," &c. Here, observe, that Christ is exalted to the highest dignity—"the right hand of God." That He is exalted to the highest dignity for the sublimest functions—"to be a Prince and a Saviour"—that in these functions He has to communicate to the world the greatest of blessings—"repentance," and "forgiveness of sins." (5) Here we have the most exalted of missions. "And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." The apostles here regarded themselves as witnesses of the greatest realities—"these things"—the great things of the Gospel; and as fellow-workers with the Great Spirit Himself. "So is also the Holy Ghost."

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## Germ s of Thought.

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SUBJECT :—*Good Men in Both Worlds.*

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."—Heb. xii. 1, 2.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Sixty-fifth.

**M**OST preachers of any lengthened experience have had this passage as a text. It has been treated in such a variety of ways, and looked upon in so many aspects, that it is all but impossible to invent a plan of treatment that shall invest it with those charms of novelty which will suggest new trains of useful thought. The grand subject is the *Christian Life*: its nature, a "race;" its qualifications,



freedom from all encumbrances, and the exercise of patience; its *spectators*, a "great cloud of witnesses;" and its *supreme object of attention*, "looking unto Jesus," &c.

For the sake of a slight variety of treatment, we may look on the words as presenting to our notice, *the good that have departed to the celestial world; the good that are still living on this earth; and the glorious Redeemer of both.*

I. THE GOOD THAT HAVE DEPARTED TO THE CELESTIAL WORLD. From the words we learn four things concerning them.

First: That they *live*. Who? The old saints whose faith is celebrated in the preceding chapter. Though some of them had left the world for thousands of years, they were still living. Abel was still alive. Arguments for the immortality of the soul have been frequently stated in the "Homilist." \* All who were ever here are still in existence. There is no extinction of souls.

Secondly: They live in *vast numbers*. "Cloud of witnesses." "Cloud," a symbol for throng. A *great* cloud—a great throng. In Paul's time, the multitudes of the saved were *great*, they were "innumerable." They have been increasing ever since, and will increase to the end of time. The saved will out-number the lost. Where sin abounded, grace will much more abound.

Thirdly: They live as *spectators of their surviving brethren on earth*. They are "witnesses" which "encompass" the Christian race-course, and they may mark the steps of every competitor. The word here translated "witnesses," (*μαρτύρων*) does not necessarily mean spectators. Still, as Paul's allusion is, undoubtedly, to the spectators pressing round to see the competitors in their contest for the prize, (Phil. iii. 14) the probability is, that the idea was in his mind when he used the word, as well as the idea expressed by Alford, of attesting by their own case the faithfulness of God to His people. Though unseen, they are near—they *encompass*

\* See Vol. IV., page 5; also page 289.

us. Though with the politics, commerce, and crafts of the world they have nothing to do, they are intensely alive to its spiritual interests and activities. In the ancient games, multitudes occupied the circular seats in the amphitheatre as spectators of the contesting parties. To this, allusion is here made. Death, after all, perhaps, does not take us out of the world.

The text leads us to look at—

II. THE GOOD THAT ARE STILL LIVING ON THIS EARTH. We are here taught concerning them—

First : *That their life is like a race-course.* It is a “race set before them.” A race has its *limitation*, so has life ; its *rules*, so has life ; its *intense activity*, so has life ; its *speedy termination*, so has life. A race is soon run ; the period between the start and the close may be full of excitement and activity, but is very short.

Secondly : *That their life, to realize its end, requires great attention.* (1) There must be a *divestment of all encumbrances*. “Let us lay aside every weight.” The competitors in the Grecian races were careful about this. They took care not to burden themselves with heavy clothing, or much food. Every effort was employed to free themselves of all unnecessary “weight.” So with us, if we would successfully run the race of life. Carnalism, worldliness, religious ritualism, formalities, and prejudices, are encumbrances by which thousands lose the grand end of life. (2) There must be a *freeing oneself from besetting sin*. “The sin which doth so easily beset us.” Perhaps all have some peculiar propensity which may be regarded as his besetting sin. There is *animalism* ; some are intensely animal in all their appetites. There is *irascibility* ; some are most irritable in temper. There is *covetousness* ; some are avaricious and money-loving in the extreme. Some are *ambitious*, having a lust after power ; some are *vain*, having a lust for show and admiration. The strongest sinful tendency of the man is his besetting sin ; the sin, as the word literally signifies, that hangs about

him, and encircles his very being. (3) There must be the *exercise of great patience of soul in our efforts*. "Let us run with patience." There must be a calm self-possession of soul, and a resolute determination to persevere unto the end. All this, then, is required in order to succeed in this life-race.

Thirdly : *That their life should be salutarily influenced by the good who are departed*. "Wherefore seeing." If it is meant that they are "witnesses" to our conduct, this should act as a powerful stimulus to right effort. How should the consciousness that their pure and loving eyes are on us stir our deepest souls into earnestness? Or if it is meant that they are "witnesses" to the value and glory of a godly life, then, too, we should feel the impulse. What did the history of Abel witness concerning sacrifice? Enoch concerning death and a future world? Abraham concerning faith? Moses concerning the wisdom of a right choice? Though dead, they speak to us still.

The text leads us to contemplate—

III. THE GLORIOUS REDEEMER OF THE GOOD IN BOTH WORLDS. "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." The word "our" is not in the original, and its insertion here gives a wrong idea. The passage does not mean that Christ is the author and completer of faith in His disciples. This is true; but is not *the* truth which the apostle endeavoured to express. The word translated "author" is sometimes translated "prince," and sometimes "captain." The idea of the apostle is that Christ is the *chief example of human goodness* :—That amongst all the great examples specified in the preceding chapter, or found in the world's annals of goodness, Christ is pre-eminent. The apostle does not insert His name in the grand list of heroes and worthies enrolled in the preceding chapter but here gives Him a place by Himself and directs to Him the supreme attention of his readers. Don't forget the others, but keep your eye ever "looking unto Jesus." Let the mariner avail himself of the light of all the stars, but let him guide his bark by the pole

star. Taking then the expression, "author and finisher of faith" as meaning the chief or supreme example of human goodness in all worlds, the words indicate three things that gave Him the pre-eminence as an example.

First : He was pre-eminent as an example in the *spirit that inspired Him*. "For the joy that was set before him." What was the *joy*? The prospect of *His own* blessedness and exaltation? No! No! There is not a particle of selfishness in His joy. His joy was the joy of *benevolence*, the joy of diminishing the misery, and augmenting the happiness of the universe; the joy of *piety*, the joy of putting down rebellion against the Infinite Father, and establishing order and loyalty in the spheres of discord and insurrection. There are men whose religion is but a struggle for heaven. Their eyes and hearts are fastened on celestial joys. They have not the spirit of Christ. He pleased not Himself. His delight was in doing the will of God. We are like Him only as we become self-oblivious.

Secondly : He was pre-eminent in the *grandeur of soul with which He met unparalleled sufferings*. His sufferings were truly incomparable. "The cross." What physical anguish, what ignominy, and, in His case, what overwhelming mental agony does "the cross," represent. But with what spirit did He "endure" it? He "*despised the shame*." The cross is not now associated with "*shame*." It is with us, in Christendom, the symbol of all that is glorious. It is worn as an ornament around the neck of beauty, it sits as a crown of glory on the spires of our churches and the domes of our cathedrals, it flaunts in the standards of triumphant armies, and it gleams as the choicest gem in the diadem of sovereigns. Poetry rings with its praises. But in the public estimation it was, in the days of Jesus, what the guillotine is now in France, and what the gallows is now in England. But He *despised* the popular "shame" connected with it. He dared public sentiment; He fronted the conventional feeling of His age with sublime heroism; He "endured the cross," praying for His enemies, and commending His spirit

to God. Herein let us follow Him, and meet our appointed lot as He met the cross.

Thirdly: He was pre-eminent in the *exaltation which He ultimately met*. "And is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." The expression means great exaltation. In another place we are told that He is "exalted far above all heavens." How high is that!

Here, then, is our great example in the race of life. Let us *keep looking* at Him. A constant looking at Him will keep all other objects in our horizon in the right place, brace us with magnanimity under the trials of life, enhance our zeal, and transfigure us into His own image.



SUBJECT:—*Noah's first Consciousness of Safety after the Deluge.*

"And Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry."—Gen. viii. 13.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Sixty-sixth.

**N**O fact in the history of mankind is more universally attested than that of the deluge. Tradition has rung it into the ear of almost all nations, and written it in the legendary tales and mythological narratives of the leading tribes of Adam's race. "If we take the circuit of the globe," says a quaint old writer, "and enquire of the inhabitants of every climate, we shall find that *the fame of the Deluge is gone through the earth*."\* The question of its *universality* is of no practical moment, and theology may let it rest in the region of speculation and debate. One thing is obvious, and on all hands admitted, that it was extensive enough to sweep from the earth the whole race of man, Noah and his family alone excepted.

The text points us to the moment when Noah seems first

\* See Kitto, Vol. I., p. 542. Dr. Pye Smith, p. 74. Dr. Hamilton on the "Pentateuch," p. 207.



assured that the dire calamity was over and past. There on Ararat he looks forth from the ark that had borne him and his with safety over those surging waters that had engulfed his race. In that ark you have the embryo of all coming generations, from it rolled down all the streams of human life that have ever flowed since through earth, and that the great ocean of eternity has since received.

Now, it is somewhat natural, and it may not be either uninteresting or unprofitable, to speculate concerning Noah's impression on his first out-look upon "the face of the ground that was dry."

I. He would, probably, be impressed with the GREATNESS OF THE CALAMITY HE HAD ESCAPED. The roaring, rushing world of waters had, it is true, subsided, they ran away to their ocean-beds like satiated lions skulking to their lair. But they had wrought a terrible desolation, they had reduced the whole earth to a vast charnel house; every living voice is hushed, and all is as silent as the grave. The patriarch perhaps, would feel two things in relation to this terrible calamity.

First: *That it was the result of sin.* "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth." (vi. 5—7.) Whatever might have been the physical cause, one thing is clear that sin was the moral. This it was that opened the windows of heaven and broke up the fountains of the mighty deep. All suffering springs from sin. Hell grows out of wrong. The patriarch would also probably feel—

Secondly: *That it was only a faint type of the final judgment.* There is a deluge of fire to come. "As it was in the days of Noah," &c. What gratitude would warm and fill his heart as he now reflected upon the terrible calamity through which he had safely passed. His anxieties, fears, and toils had been immense, but all was over now, and he was safe.

On the first out-look of Noah upon "the face of the ground that was dry"—

II. He would probably be impressed with the EFFICACY OF THE REMEDIAL EXPEDIENT. How would he admire the ark that had so nobly battled with the billows and so safely weathered the storm.

First: *This expedient was Divine.* God sketched the plan of the vessel, superintended its building, and helped the builder in every effort. (Gen. vi. 14—16.) There was no genius amongst that generation of giants that could have planned such a ship. Christianity, the great expedient for saving souls from the deluge of moral evil, is God's plan. "What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh," &c. Philosophy exhausted itself in the trial.

Secondly: *This expedient alone was effective.* When the dreadful storm came on, when the waters began to rush from the floating seas above and the foaming seas below, filling up the valleys and gradually ascending the mountains, we may rest assured that every one of that terror-stricken generation seized some scheme to rescue him from the threatened doom. The loftiest trees were climbed, the highest heights were scaled; but all in vain. None were saved but those who were in the ark. So it is in the great moral danger to which all are exposed. Men have their different schemes of salvation, but only one will succeed. "There is no other name," &c. Christianity is as unlike all other remedial expedients, as the ark was unlike all the productions of antediluvian art.

Thirdly: The expedient was only effective *to those who committed themselves to it.* Noah and his family entered the ark and were saved; all the others were lost. Most of the lost perhaps saw the ark; many perhaps studied it scientifically; some probably greatly admired it; and not a few, it may be, intended to enter it. But all were lost who did not *actually* enter. So in relation to Christianity. You may study it, admire it, and intend to adopt it; but all in vain.

Again, on the first out-look of Noah upon "the face of the ground that was dry"—

III. He would probably be impressed with the WISDOM OF HIS FAITH IN GOD. He must have felt now—

First: That it was wiser to believe in the word of God, than to trust *to the conclusions of his own reason*. He might have reasoned from the mercy of God, and the general experience of mankind, that such an event as the deluge would never have happened; but he trusted in God's word, and it had proved true. He must have felt—

Secondly: That it was wiser to believe in the word of God, than to trust *to the uniformity of nature*. Nature, as she proceeded with an unbroken regularity, and undeviating march before his eyes year after year, might have spoken to his reason the impossibility of a deluge. But he trusted God rather than nature: it proved the wiser course. He must have felt—

Thirdly: That it was wiser to believe in God's word, than to trust *to the current opinion of his contemporaries*. The general opinion of the men of his age was, that the idea of a deluge was absurd, and that he was a brainless fanatic for entertaining such a notion. He, perhaps, was the subject of their scorn and ridicule during the hundred and twenty years in which he was building the ark. Still, he trusted God rather than his contemporaries, and now he felt that his course was the wiser one.

Now, will not the feelings of the good man when he first enters heaven, correspond in some measure with the feelings of Noah on the occasion when he first looked from his ark, saw the face of the "dry ground," and *felt* that he was safe? Will there not be a similar impression of the tremendous calamity that has been escaped? Will not the sainted spirit, as it feels itself safe in the celestial state, reflect with adoring gratitude upon that deluge of sin and suffering from which it has been for ever delivered? Will it not reflect with admiration and praise upon that wonderful remedial expedient by which it was rescued?—an expedient like the ark—Divine, alone effective, and effective only to those who committed themselves to it? Will it not feel, with rapturous delight,

how much wiser it was for him to believe in God, than to trust the conclusions of his own judgment, the uniformity of nature, or the current opinion of his contemporaries?

Brothers, there is an awful deluge coming. The clouds that hang over the universal conscience of the world, not only prophesy it, but are preparing for it; they are nursing the tempest, they are forging the thunderbolts and kindling the lightnings. There is a remedial expedient, there is an ark of safety—the only one. Trust not to thy reason, nor to nature, nor to the prevailing sentiment of thine age. Believe in God and enter the ark, and thou shalt escape the ruin of the approaching catastrophe.



SUBJECT :—*Poor, yet Rich.*

“Blessed are the poor in spirit : for their’s is the kingdom of Heaven.”  
—Matt. v. 3.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Sixty-seventh.

**I**N the opening verses of this chapter, (v. 3—12) we have seven beatitudes. The number “seven” is the symbol of perfection ; so that seven beatitudes intimate a perfection of blessedness. And the blessedness of Christians is perfect, their redemption is complete. An eminent commentator says :—“The seven beatitudes form an ascending line, in which the new life is traced from stage to stage, from its commencement to its completion.” And the basis of this ascending line is poverty in spirit. “The poor in spirit” are those who, in reference to their spirit, feel themselves poor—those who inwardly realize their need of spiritual things—those who have a deep inward consciousness of spiritual poverty. “Their’s is the kingdom of heaven” in its fulness of riches ; their’s are those spiritual blessings they feel the want of. The poverty in spirit is met in “the kingdom of heaven” by an abundance of riches, the spiritual blessings

in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The poor in spirit have the true riches of Christ's kingdom ; partially here, and fully hereafter.

Thus, then, in our text we have *a class pronounced blessed, and the grounds of the benediction.*

I. THE SUBJECTS OF THE BENEDICTION. "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Analyze poverty in spirit as explained above into one or two of its elements. It embraces such as these :—A sense of spiritual ignorance ; a sense of moral depravity ; a sense of merited wretchedness.

First : *There is a sense of spiritual ignorance.* The man who is "poor in spirit" feels his need of a knowledge of Divine truth : he is a devout inquirer after truth. Conscious of his poverty in regard to truth—in regard both to its possession and appreciation—such an one makes earnest and humble efforts, in dependence on the Divine guidance, to obtain and apprehend it. He is free from the dominion of prejudice and of everything that would exalt itself against the ready reception of the truth in all its purity, fulness and freshness. He feels his moral blindness as a sinner in regard to Divine truth, and desires that his eyes may be opened to behold wondrous things out of God's law. He feels his need of the Holy Spirit to reveal to him the things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and which have not entered into the heart of man, but which God has prepared for them that love Him." In a word, he is poor in spirit in regard to *truth*.

Secondly : *There is a sense of moral depravity.* The "poor in spirit" have a deep feeling that they are sinners—sinners both legally and constitutionally. They feel that they are sinners in the eye of the law, and that their whole soul is bent on sin. They are such as the Spirit has convinced of sin. They know and feel that they need to be saved, both from the guilt and power of sin. There is the absence in them of a spiritual fulness and repletion in respect to holiness : and there is the presence in them of a deep conviction of personal sinfulness. They feel that "in them there dwelleth



no good thing": that their whole nature is corrupt and prone to that which is evil—the will perverse and rebellious, the affections vitiated and disordered, the members of the body "instruments of unrighteousness unto sin." This is the language of their heart: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." We "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." In a word, they are poor in spirit in regard to *holiness*.

Thirdly: *There is a sense of merited wretchedness*. "The poor in spirit" have the divinely wrought conviction that as sinners they have incurred and deserve eternal misery. They feel, that on account of their moral impurity—their inherent depravity and actual sin—they deserve nothing but condemnation and misery, and that for ever. They feel, that they are by nature and practice, involved in a state of moral depravity and sinfulness from which they cannot redeem themselves: and in so far they have a deep sense of wretchedness. They know, and they know it as a divinely implanted conviction, that the wages of sin is death, and that so, in themselves and as sinners, they are far from the fountain of happiness and bliss, and can have only a fearful "looking for of judgment," &c. In a word, they are poor in spirit in regard to *happiness*.

Are we then of this class,—“the poor in spirit?” Are we poor in spirit in regard to *truth*, *holiness*, and *happiness*, and have we been awakened to a sense of our *ignorance*, *sin*, and *misery*? If so, *blessed* are we. We have the Saviour's benediction.

II. THE GROUNDS OF THE BENEDICTION. "For their's is the kingdom of Heaven." Jesus pronounces the "poor in spirit" to be blessed as having the kingdom of heaven for their possession. Poor in spirit, they are rich in possession, having that kingdom whose treasures make the soul rich in time and through eternity. Its fulness of spiritual riches—truth for the spiritually ignorant, purity for the spiritually depraved, blessedness for the spiritually miserable—belongs to "the

poor in spirit." View "the kingdom of heaven" as meeting the *felt wants* described under the former head.

The kingdom of heaven meets the poor in spirit :—

First : *In the revelation of Divine truth.* He that humbles himself and becomes as a little child enjoys Divine disclosures of truth. The hungry soul is filled with the food of Divine revelation : the poor in spirit partake of truth, specially of the truth of Christ. Yea, that truth becomes their inseparable possession. The Spirit so brings it home to them, to their mind and heart, that it becomes as it were a part of their being, and they are thereby ennobled and enriched. It develops itself in thought, feeling, principle, and is thus indeed a rich possession, a real blessedness, a joy for ever.

Secondly : *In the bestowment of moral purity.* To the poor in spirit, Jesus is made of God both righteousness and sanctification. The poor in spirit can name Jesus by this name "The Lord our righteousness." And they are besides renewed in true holiness. In them a work of sanctification, in its nature complete and progressive, is being carried on. They are being changed into the very image of Jesus, from glory to glory.

Thirdly : *In the securing of unending bliss.* The poor in spirit have blessedness here and happiness in reserve. They have blessedness in possession, the blessedness of pardoned sinners, of a life of holiness, of Divine disclosures of truth, of Divine sonship, &c. But in its full glory and fruition it is a thing reserved. Here their happiness is often mixed : in heaven it will be complete and without alloy, and never withdrawn.

Are you in search of blessedness ? Then here is true blessedness, the only true blessedness, namely, to be in possession of "the kingdom of heaven." Here are boundless provisions to meet the deepest spiritual poverty—truth for spiritual ignorance, purity for moral depravity, bliss for merited wretchedness. Only be "poor in spirit," "set your affections on things above," "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

GLENBERVIE.

SUBJECT :—*The Rest of God's People.*

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. . . . Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."—Heb. iv. 9, 11.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Sixty-eighth.

**A**LL mankind are seeking something in which to repose. The inquiry of every one is, "Who will shew us any good?" Most seek it in the world, and seldom find anything save vexation and disappointment. But the Bible reveals One who is willing to bestow a lasting peace. The Saviour says, "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The rest which Christ bestows in this world is comparative. It is more than its recipients once possessed; but it is not complete. It is only the foretaste of a fuller, a perfect rest. To this, the text refers, "There remaineth a rest to the people of God."

The verses suggest three enquiries :—

**I. WHAT IS THE REST?** One very common notion of it is that it is an entire cessation from labor. To those who have been toiling all their lives, this is the prominent idea that it presents to the mind. But it is something more than this. The word translated "rest" (*σαββατισμὸς*) denotes a keeping of Sabbath. It is not a state of mere repose. As the Sabbath, a time set apart for God, brings its duties, the noblest man can engage in on earth, so will this eternal Sabbath. The Sabbath among the Jews was peculiarly sacred. No secular work was allowed to be done on it. Toil was not permitted to profane it. The decalogue even forbade the use of the inferior animals, so that it might be a time of rest both for man and beasts. It was a day devoted exclusively to the Lord. So will this be. It will be a greater, because a perfect rest. The rest of God from the work of creation, the rest of man from worldly labor—these were foreshadowings and pledges of the eternal rest. In what will it peculiarly consist? It will be—

First: *A rest from sin.* It is for those who are purified from all that is evil. The unholy cannot possess it. They will not be allowed to partake of it. Nothing shall enter it that defileth, nothing that maketh a lie.

Secondly: *It will be a rest from sorrow.* This often comes to the Christian from the sins of others. When he is removed from these, he will have no more to trouble him. But these blessings are only negative. It consists of what is positive also. (1) It is a bestowment of eternal life. This is the Christian's peculiar privilege. The Gospel it was that brought life and immortality to light. (2) It is being with Christ. Now we see Him but by the eye of faith: then we shall see Him face to face. (3) It is working for God without weariness, and with full powers to do so.

II. WHEN IS THE REST? It is future. It is not a rest in this world. This life is a life of trouble, and strife, and toil. It is a period of discipline, and stern conflict. In it we work for the future, and upon it the future depends. Like a day of battle it will bring eternal peace, or unending bondage. It is true that this rest begins in this world. It commences with the renewed soul when it first "looks not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." It brightens upon us more and more as we rise from the lower, the temporal, to the higher, the eternal life. It is fully revealed to us when we have done with mortality and sin. Until then we cannot completely enter into, nor enjoy, "the rest that remaineth for the people of God."

III. FOR WHOM IS THE REST. They are not all who profess to be the followers of the Saviour. They are a peculiar people. They are those who love holiness, and hate iniquity and sin. Their hearts are set to do right. Though in the world, they are not of the world. It is not for all men, because all will not receive it. They do not wish it. They will not obey God on earth; how could they serve Him in heaven? They hate the shadow of this rest. To some it is a weariness and a grief.

They would willingly abolish it from the world. How, then, could they enjoy the substance?

To the Christian, these words are full of hope and holy consolation. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy will come with the morning! The sins of the past may rise up in sorrow before him; but he has a rest that still remains. The world may be, and often is, a land of darkness and of the shadow of death; but he presses forward to a land of righteousness, of life, of light, of God.

To the neglecter of religion, these words convey nothing but despair. There is a rest remaining, but it is not for him. Again and again he has been invited to the Saviour, but he has preferred the things of the world to those of eternity. He casts realities away for shadows. Therefore he will have no part in this rest. H. B.



## Biblical Exegesis.

EPHES. VI. 17.

*καὶ τὴν μάχαιραν τοῦ Πνεύματος  
ὃ ἐστὶ ῥῆμα Θεοῦ.*

THIS passage is very often quoted, or alluded to, with the evident understanding that the "word of God," mentioned is the Bible, and that this "word" is employed by the Spirit as a sword. This notion, we shall attempt to disprove; and think that, to say the least, we shall succeed in showing that it is probably erroneous.

The apostle is here describing the various parts of the panoply of God, which he mentions one by one, and as he mentions, explains by a genitive, which gives the spiritual



thing intended by the figure. Thus we have "the preparation of the gospel of peace;" that is, the Gospel is the thing signified by the figurative term "preparation," (ἑτοιμασία) which alludes to the greaves worn by soldiers;—"the shield of faith;" where faith is spoken of as a shield;—and "the helmet of salvation;" where salvation is figured as a helmet. Or, if we please, taking the technical term of the grammarians, we may regard this as the *Genitive of Ablation*, that is, which denotes the source whence derived, or that which supplies the thing denoted by the governing word. This makes no important difference. According to this, the Gospel supplies greaves; faith, a shield; salvation, a helmet. The point to which we direct attention, is *the identity* of the things mentioned; first figuratively, then literally. The Gospel is identical with the greaves; faith, with the shield; and salvation, with the helmet.

Now when we come to "the sword of the Spirit," why depart from the principle hitherto followed through the passage? Why say the sword *employed* by the Spirit? Such a sudden change of exposition does violence to the laws of language. It appears to us that nothing can be plainer than that, as the other parts of the panoply mentioned, as greaves, shield, and helmet, are the Gospel, faith and salvation respectively—so the sword is the Spirit. The Gospel furnishes you with greaves, that is, you may so employ it, faith is your shield, salvation your helmet, and the Spirit your sword.

In order further to establish this point, let us compare 1 Thess. v. 8.

ἐνδυσάμενοι θώρακα πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης  
καὶ περικεφαλαίαν ἐλπίδα σωτηρίας.

Here, the genitive is used in the first member, and two accusatives in mutual apposition in the second. It is unquestionable that this use of the genitive is equivalent to apposition, that the two grammatical forms have precisely the same force, and that our translators have rightly rendered both. "The breastplate of faith and love, and *for* a helmet the hope of salvation."

Just so, in the passage of Ephesians under consideration, the apostle means to exhort us to take *for* a sword, the Spirit.

But we are at once met with the objection, that this view is inconsistent with the latter clause, "which is the word of God." If the *Spirit* and the *sword* are identical, they must both be identical with the *word*. But how can the Spirit be the same as the *word*.

Let us look at the Greek. *ὁ ἐστὶ ῥῆμα Θεοῦ*. You observe that the relative pronoun is neuter, and therefore cannot agree with *μάχαιραν*, which is feminine. One would naturally refer it to *πνεύματος*, which is neuter. The only possible answer is, that *ὁ* is in the neuter by *attraction* to *ῥῆμα*. To this, we reply, that it is unnecessary to resort to attraction, since there is already a neuter antecedent, namely, *πνεύματος*. You should only be driven to attraction by a proof that *πνεύματος* cannot be the antecedent. But this proof is not forthcoming.

On the other hand, there does not seem to be any impropriety in identifying *πνεῦμα* and *ῥῆμα*. The latter word, which is to be carefully distinguished from *Λογος*, the Eternal Word, is often used in the singular number to signify a *Divine energy*, by which works are effected. Matt. iv. 4.—"Man doth not live by bread alone, but by *every word* (*ἐπὶ παντὶ ῥήματι*) that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Heb. xi. 3.—"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word (*ῥήματι*) of God." Heb. vi. 5.—"And have tasted the good *word* of God," (*καὶ καλὸν γευσάμενος Θεοῦ ῥῆμα*) which is evidently closely related in meaning to the clause which immediately follows, "and the powers of the world to come." Rom. x. 17.—"The hearing is by the word of God" (*διὰ ῥήματος Θεοῦ*); that is, when God speaks to a mortal, He puts forth a Divine power to make the man know both that he is spoken to, and *who* it is that speaks. Noah would hardly have built the ark, nor Abraham offered up his son, had they not known certainly by *whom* they were commanded to do so. This Divine operation on the human

faculties, is by the Spirit of God. The Spirit and the word become thus identified

The above result which we have arrived at by grammatical study of the original, is essentially the view taken by the oldest and best commentators. Theodoret says, "He calls the sword of the Spirit, the operation of the Spirit; and the operation of the Spirit, he calls the word of God." Some of the best of the modern commentators also adopt the same view.

It is remarkable that  $\rho\eta\mu\alpha$  in the singular does not occur in St. John's Gospel. The word in Heb. iv. 12, "The word of God is quick and powerful," &c., is not  $\rho\eta\mu\alpha$ , but  $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ .

Let us in a few words sum up. Negatively: The apostle does not here call the letter of Scripture the sword of the Spirit. Positively: But he calls the Spirit a sword, and identifies this with the energy which makes known God and His will. This energy comes to us by way of attack, fighting against and slaying our lusts.



## The Chair of Theology.

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[This position we have rather been elected to by others, than arrogantly assumed of ourselves. Studious young men, in and out of orders, are adopting the custom of asking us for information and advice respecting a course of theological study, the choice of books, and the like. The thought has occurred, that it would be for their advantage, and our convenience, to throw such remarks as we are able to offer into a systematic form, once for all, that our correspondents may be referred to a standing document.]

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IN relation to the Rule of Faith, four chief doctrines divide the Christian world.

First, there is the doctrine of the Romish Church, which not only regards the Church as the authoritative interpreter of Scripture, but also the traditions of the Church as authoritative for doctrines not discernible in Scripture.

Then, there is the Ultra-Protestant doctrine, which discards both traditional doctrine and traditional interpretation, and trusts everything to "private judgment."

Thirdly, there is the Quaker doctrine, which is essentially the same with that of some modern spiritualists, who exalt some inward principle above the Scriptures. This principle is sometimes named "inner light," or "the Spirit," sometimes "consciousness," "instinct," or the like. This principle has the right of choosing amongst scriptural statements those which are in harmony with itself, and of explaining away or rejecting the rest. It has also the right of introducing new doctrines, which are not found in Scripture.

Lastly, there is the view of standard English divines, which regards the Bible as the only Rule of Faith, but in interpretation is guided by the general consent of antiquity.

On these conflicting views, the student may be guided to a legitimate decision by the writings of the celebrated and eminent Charles Leslie. His theological works are in two volumes folio, 1721, and are nearly all directed against the various heresies of that day, which, under different names, are re-appearing now. Several of Charles Leslie's works have been separately re-published in recent years.

To the works of Leslie may be advantageously added Canon Wordsworth's treatise on "The Inspiration of Scripture," which contains some valuable remarks on the grand error of the Roman Catholics respecting tradition.

Dr. Lee's treatise on "The Inspiration of Scripture" is deservedly held in high estimation. It is full of learning and originality, and may be said to furnish the student with materials for knowledge and judgment on the subject in greater abundance and completeness than any other work. It was this book which procured for the author his present eminent position as examining chaplain to Archbishop Trench.

With regard to the "History of the Canon," it is not necessary for the student to push his inquiries beyond the Books of the New Testament. With regard to the Old, it

can easily be established that the Canon was the same at the Christian Era as at present. For the New Testament, the most convenient book is Brooke Foss Wescott's "General View of the History of the Canon of the New Testament during the First Four Centuries."

On the "Criticism of the New Testament," that is, the settlement of the text, the student will find ample information, clearly given, in the Rev. F. H. Scrivener's "Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament." As this work was published before the discovery of the "Codex Sinaiticus," it will be necessary also to procure the "Full Collation of the Codex Sinaiticus with the received text of the New Testament," with a Critical Introduction, by the same author.



## The Christian Year.

BY A CLERGYMAN.



### *The Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity.*

"For our conversation (πολίτευμα city-system) is (ὑπάρχει is from the beginning) in heaven."—Phil. iii. 20.

WE have heard much of late concerning "godliness in common life," and we have been told that "a man's professions of piety are to be trusted only in proportion to his discharge of ordinary duties; and that what society wants is, not saints, but honest men—good husbands, fathers, and neighbours. Church-going and family prayers cannot be allowed to atone for cold-heartedness and meanness, and it is quite possible that godliness, if not hypocritical, is only another form of selfishness."

Now, in all this kind of talk, as in much beside which is



proffered as new doctrine in these days, there is a mixture of truth and error—much which is good and right, and as old as the hills; much, also, which is one-sided, narrow, and perverted. On the one hand, it may be, that there have been and are hypocrites, false professors, who try to hide their faults from others and themselves under a cloak of religion. On the other hand, there has doubtless been a tendency, even amongst the sincere, to separate too much religion and common life, as if one could be rightly conducted apart from another. Religion has been put on one side, as an important business indeed, but suitable for separate attention; and the purifying waters of godliness have not been made to mingle, as they ought, with the streams of every-day thought, feeling, and action. It has been regarded as an affair of another world, to be minded here, not always and everywhere, but at stated times, Sundays and other holy-days; and in proper places, as churches and chapels. As a consequence, we have seen much unpractical devotion on the one hand, and much unsanctified business on the other. The so-called “saint” has done, “in the way of business,” things which would not endure the test of a sound conscience or the scrutiny of Omniscient purity. Or, sometimes neglecting business altogether, he has given himself up to the false luxury of pious sloth; and while believing himself to have visions of heaven, has on earth proved but “a cumberer of the ground.”

The text, and the whole passage to which it belongs, will help us in determining the truth. The apostle has just been complaining of some persons whose life was inconsistent with the Gospel. Their sins are so serious and notorious that they are injurious to the holy cause, “enemies of the cross,” that cross which is the symbol of the Gospel, and which as the memorial of a stupendous sacrifice and holy surrender of self, ought ever to be a centre for a holy people. It is only defiled and its influence nullified by these base allies. On this account St. Paul weeps. What a sight—this great and strong man in tears! He sums up their wickedness in the

remarkable words, *who mind earthly things*. He recommends his own conduct as an opposite example. This he does, not arrogantly, but as an apostle, with authority, and by inspiration. Just as he sets forth his doctrine as Divine truth to be received on pain of perdition, so he points to his life as to be followed by believers, because he himself is a follower of the life of the Lord. And whereas they whom he condemns “mind earthly things,” he says of himself, *our conversation is in heaven*.

The fulness of the meaning of these words comprehends *the Christian state, hope, and duty*.

I. *The Christian state*. Heaven is a reality now existing, although only known by faith. To heaven we belong already, not to earth. In heaven is the source and centre of our life; the Object of our love, the spring of our action. When Christ was on earth, He lived a life of perfect righteousness and love, a life quite unearthly, actuated by heavenly principles. It was closed by so high and holy a death, that after resurrection, He could remain no more amongst the unworthy inhabitants of earth. He must be exalted to another sphere. He is fit for the throne of heaven. Heaven shall be the centre of His influence. Thither is He raised, that He may reign, and “fill all things.” His throne is in heaven, but His kingdom extends to earth. Here His power is exerted; here His laws are in force; here is still felt the influence of His life and death, the energy of His character and doctrine, the might of His Spirit. Though we live on the earth, it is not our home; our “life is hid,” we are the servants of *the King invisible*.

Christ reigns in heaven, and has subjects there. He reigns over the holy angels, the immediate retinue of the Most High, who have never known sin, and whose powers are incalculably beyond ours. He reigns over the holy ones who have departed from earth “in His faith and fear,” and who raise a song of redemption in which angels cannot join. These blessed angels, and these deceased human saints form one

grand community, one Church, one kingdom with us who are still in humiliation and conflict here. Though we see them not, we belong to them, and that much more than we belong to the ungodly on earth. We are joined to them by the same laws, the same loyalty, the same essential service, though performed by them and us under different conditions. *Ye are come unto mount Sion.*

II. *The Christian hope.* Heaven, though a reality, is to us a mystery. Though, if we are faithful, the invisible celestial force is more potent than the influence of the world, present though it be, and we already potentially belong to the heavenly country; yet the fulness and the manifestation of our connexion with heaven, and the actual entrance upon it are reserved for the future. This then is the Christian's hope. He is loyal to His King, whom unseen he loves. He is destined to behold Him one day in glory who was crucified. Who can tell or conceive the bliss of that sight, of nearer intercourse and union with Him whom the disciples loved without fully knowing, whom apostles proclaimed as the Christ, and in whom, on their testimony, we have believed?

We shall not only see the King, but be associated with His most favored subjects. Heaven is a congregation of pure and happy beings in intimate society—laborers receiving their reward, conquerors triumphing, benefactors of their race, watching from higher ground the progress of right, servants entered into their Master's joy.

Connected with them are our own departed friends. When the soul left the body, instead of going amongst strangers, it was received to better friends and old acquaintances, to a prepared place, and a new and better home.

Disembodied spirits, though in Paradise, are not in perfection. For that they wait until the resurrection morning, the birthday of the spiritual body. These bodies of ours characterize the period of our humiliation. They chain us to earth. They relate us to beasts. Their powers are limited, their necessities base. But as we are citizens of heaven, it is

unfitting that we be long tenants of these earthly dwellings. We shall soon forsake them. But it is not enough to be rid of these ; we must gain other and nobler. If we leave the hovel, we shall enter the mansion. We will gladly strip off our rags to be clothed in *the best robe*. We lose the corrupt, mean and weak animal body, and gain one which is spiritual, powerful, glorious and incorruptible ; the workmanship and gift of His skilful hands, and modelled after His own fashion, who is “the Second Adam, the Lord from heaven.” We look for Him to re-appear from that heaven whither He is gone and to which we belong, to come again to befriend us, make the virtual actual, turn faith to sight and consummate redemption, to awake His sleeping brethren, and “change them that are alive and remain.” *For our conversation* is in heaven ; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord *Jesus Christ ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.*

III. *The Christian duty* was not only present to the apostle’s mind, but was actually fulfilled. “Our conversation *is in heaven.*”

Heaven is our true home : then let us not act or think as if earth were it. Here we are *strangers and pilgrims*, and *have no abiding city*. We *confess* it, and *seek one to come*.

Let us cherish the thought of one day seeing Christ in heaven, of being joined with Him in glory and joy. Let us often commune with Him now, that we may be ready for His nearer presence. Our sins will pierce Him then no more. Why should they now ? We will away with all indulgences, pursuits, speech, feelings, thoughts, which are offensive to Him.

Already members of the kingdom of heaven, which includes angels and the spirits of the just—prophets, apostles, martyrs, and our old companions now in peace—if we hope one day to be raised to their abode, let us strive evermore after worthiness of their fellowship.

Weary of these animal bodies which humble us by meanness, weakness and decay; cheered and elevated by the bright promise of resurrection in spiritual bodies, we will not allow those we now have to betray us to the bondage of sin. *To be carnally minded is death. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.* We must not look for a Christ-like body in the resurrection, if we now live mere animal lives. Remember the words of even a man like St. Paul: *I keep under my body and bring it into subjection*: or, as they may be rendered, *I buffet my body and lead it about as a slave.*

We are now in a position to judge what is the truth, and what the error, involved in the kind of talk to which reference was made at the beginning, from men who call for morality and undervalue the spiritual life. We not only acknowledge, we urge the necessity and the obligation of what has been called ordinary morality. We utterly repudiate the Christianity of those men who largely profess faith, and use high-flown language concerning spiritual experiences, while they neglect common duties. But we say that earthly duties are made such by the laws of Heaven, and can be performed only by heavenly motives and heavenly grace. Godliness is certainly an affair of another world, but it is to run through all our life here, as an omnipotent sanctifier. True godliness is not any form of selfishness; it is the only enemy of selfishness. For, while it includes care for the highest well-being of the individual, and secures the salvation of soul and body; it does so, not by holding out the hope of a world of self-indulgence beyond the present, as a reward for religion here, but by bringing us under the influence of almighty love. This constrains us to please self no more, but "to live for him who died for us and rose again." It creates and sustains in us an affectionate care for our fellows, as one with Him who "is not ashamed to call them brethren," and is asking us to live and work for them for His sake.

Morality is dependent on godliness as the plant on the soil, the air, the rain and the sunshine. Take these away, and *the grace of the fashion of it perisheth.* They will ever make the



best husbands and fathers, the most honorable men of business and the best citizens, whose sense of justice and whose kindly feelings are constantly nourished and trained by devotion. Intercourse with a God of righteousness, with charity personified in Christ, hearing His word, asking for His spirit, is the best preparation for the work of every day ; and this alone will guide our steps in perplexity, elevate and calm, purify and strengthen our minds ; render us capable of justice, kindness and self-denial ; prepare us for death by fitting us to live, and make us worthy and faithful on earth by giving us the citizenship of heaven.



## The Preacher's Finger-Post.



### THE WEALTH OF GOD AND THE OBLIGATION OF MAN.

"All souls are mine."—Ezek.  
xviii. 4.

This is a wonderful utterance. It is the Eternal asserting His claim to souls. It suggests two thoughts :—

I. THE WEALTH OF GOD. He *owns* souls—intelligent, free, influential, deathless souls. First : His wealth is *immense*. The cattle upon a thousand hills are His, the sea is His for He made it, the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof ; all the planets and systems that form the material universe are

His, but what is more than all, *souls* are His, the universe of spirits is His. Think of the *value* of *one* soul. Think of the inexhaustible powers contained in one soul, of the wonderful things that one soul is capable of producing, of the interminable influence for good or bad that one soul originates : and it may be well said, that one soul is of more value than the whole world. A soul can think upon its Maker, the material universe cannot : a soul can change its course by its own volition, the material universe cannot ; a soul can reflect the very nature of

God, the material universe cannot. But if *one* soul is so valuable, what must be the value of all the millions that compose a generation, and of all the generations that ever have been or ever will be? God owns *all* souls. Secondly: His wealth is *righteous*. He has the most absolute, the most unquestionable right to them. He made them: He is the only Creator, and He has the only right. They are His, with all their faculties and powers. Thirdly: His wealth is *inalienable*. Souls cannot be taken from Him, they cannot pass into other hands. Whether they are good or bad, useful or injurious, saved or damned, they are His. They cannot become their own, nor can they become the property of another. They are His, absolutely, righteously, and for ever. Fourthly: His wealth is *ever-augmenting*. Whether He is creating new material worlds and systems or not, some captious spirit may dare to question; but as to the creation of *new* souls, that admits of no debate or question. Souls, by hundreds, come into the world fresh from the Eternal Creator every day. In truth, of all things on the earth, souls alone are new creations. The mountains are old, and the sea is old, and the river is old, and even

the youngest plants and animals that appear are but old materials entered into new combinations, nothing more. But souls are new in the entirety of their nature. Fresh emanations from the Eternal Father are they all. Thus His wealth of souls increases. *Dieu seul est grand mes frères*—"God alone is great, my brethren," exclaimed the eloquent Massillon, as he stood over the corpse of his monarch, charged to deliver the funeral oration. In the sight of the text, we may truly say, "God alone is rich." What are the possessions of the world's millionaires and monarchs, compared to the wealth of Him who owns one soul? Mere dust, falling every minute from the hand; nothing more. The text suggests—

II. THE OBLIGATION OF MAN. If we are His, our duty is obvious. First: *We should act according to His will*. He has made us for a purpose, and it is for us to find out that purpose and fulfil it. He has revealed His will most clearly in our reason and our conscience, as well as in His written Word. It is His will that we should not "live to ourselves"—not seek our own. The selfish man aims to "rob God" of His right.

It is His will that we should centre our affections on Him, love Him with all our hearts, &c. He who sets his affections upon another, violates the right of the Eternal. It is His will that we should avail ourselves of the provisions of mercy in Christ Jesus. To believe on the Mediator, and obtain sanctification through His cleansing influences, are the expressions of His will. We must, in one word, act as stewards, not as proprietors. Secondly : *We should confide implicitly in His protection.* We are His, and if we use ourselves according to His direction, He will take care of us. He will be our shield in the battle, and our refuge in the storm. Thirdly : *We should be jealous for His rights.* (1) We should zealously maintain His rights in ourselves. We should allow no one to extort service or homage from us that belong to God. We should maintain inviolate within us the rights of our Maker. (2) We should practically recognize His right in our fellow-men. We should never require them to render us an affection or service which belongs to God only. We should battle against priest-craft, oppression, and slavery, on the ground of loyalty to Heaven.

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#### GOD'S WORD BETTER THAN WEALTH.

"The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver."—Ps. cxix. 72.

GOD'S WORD is a law, its force is authoritative, and its function is to regulate. It is not for speculation, but for practice. It is here affirmed that this Word is better than secular wealth. It is of course implied *that material wealth is a good thing.* There are some who profess to despise riches, and to look with something like contempt at that which the world prizes so highly. Such feelings are more frequently feigned than real, and those who profess them would be only too glad to have their exchequer enriched. Where they are real they are foolish, for material wealth is good. It increases our facilities for mental culture, it procures books, teachers, libraries and leisure. It multiplies our sources of pleasure by enabling us to visit distant scenes, and to see new aspects of nature, new modes of life, and new styles of art. It augments our social powers, and greatly extends and deepens our influence with our contemporaries. What the text implies, all wise men will admit, that material wealth is a good thing. But good

as it is, the WORD OF GOD is *better*, better than any amount of wealth.

I. IT SECURES A HIGHER CULTURE. Wealth can procure books and leisure, but it cannot supply that stimulus and inspiration that will set the faculties to work. But the books procured, it may be said, will do this. I thankfully grant that there are productions of human genius and learning that exert a quickening influence upon the mind of the thoughtful reader. But the culture that the highest class of such books effects falls miserably below that which the Word of God achieves. The Word of God brings out latent energies of soul that nothing else can reach. It gives a freedom and a force to the intellect, a depth and a purity to the sympathies, a sensibility to the conscience, an invincibility to the purpose, a refinement to the tastes, a penetration to the eye, and a pinion to the imagination, that no other appliances on this earth can furnish. Hence all our great painters, and poets, and authors have caught their inspiration from the scenes and subjects of the Bible.

II. IT INVESTS WITH A HIGHER POWER. It is granted

that wealth endows its possessor with a certain kind of power. But very inferior is it to that which the Word of God imparts to its possessor. What power of *influence* does it give! However great the influence which a rich man has on account of his wealth, it is not to be compared to the influence which that man has, who lives out the Word of God in his daily walk. He touches the deepest chords in souls, and their vibrations will ring along the ages. What power of *endurance*! Wealth cannot impart magnanimity, fortitude, courage; but the Word of God does to the highest degree. It enables the soul to glory in tribulation, and to welcome death with rapture.

III. IT OPENS UP HIGHER ENJOYMENTS. Wealth, it is true, supplies enjoyments higher than the grossly animal—the enjoyment of new scenery for example. It affords the means of travel, which is a great pleasure. The opulent man can visit the cradles of civilization, walk the theatres where the terrible dramas of ancient history were acted, stand where Socrates taught, where Demosthenes thundered where Cæsar fell, where Paul preached and where the world's Redeemer died. But the Bible

can give something even of the pleasure of such travelling. He that studies the Word of God travels far away in mind. "You are," to use the language of another, "through the Bible, carried back to share in the patriarchal wanderings and apostolic journeys and voyages. You haunt the shores of the Mediterranean, around which gathered so much of the whole history of the old world, in its conquests, its traffic, its literature, and its idolatries." I lift the leaf of Scripture and am within the curtains of Abraham's tent. I enter the closet where Daniel kneels, I stand by the pillow where Jacob dies; I am near him in Peniel, as he wrestles, and God comes down to confer with His servant. But there are enjoyments which the Bible alone can give—the enjoyment of an *approving conscience, a loving spirit, an ever-brightening future, and the friendship of the everlasting Father.*

IV. IT CONNECTS WITH A HIGHER WORLD. The gold and silver of all the earth can form no connection between us and the celestial state, can procure us no admission into the heavenly world. The Rothschilds and their worldly treasures part for ever at death. "Naked came we

into the world," &c. But the Word of God abides in us, goes with us as our light and our sanctuary.

Let us then value the Bible as the greatest treasure beneath the sun. I examine two things. One is an old patrimonial mansion. I go through its spacious corridors, halls, and rooms, embellished by the devices of many a generation. I saunter over its lawns and gardens; walk its old park too. I survey the many broad acres around, belonging to the lordly estate. The other thing I examine is an old family Bible that has come down through three centuries. I turn over its leaves, which the hand of time has made brittle and brown; I find some verses in almost every chapter marked, and leaves here and there doubled down. On many passages a tear has evidently fallen, some truth shot from the sentence to the reader's heart, and the eye had dropped penitence or joy. On some verses there is the mark of the finger; the reader found something there to chain his heart awhile, and he paused to think. Those tears were shed, and those finger marks were made by various members of the different generations of that old family. The eyes that dropped those tears, and the finger that



made those marks have been dust long ago.

Now, I ask, which has been of the greatest service to that old family, the patrimonial estate, or that old Bible? Which woke the deepest thrills of delight? Which served most to lessen human woe and swell the tide of human bliss? Which originated thoughts and efforts that best contributed to the good of the universe? Which, now, in eternity, is held in the highest esteem by the various members of that long ancestral line into whose hands they fell from time to time? Let reason, let the experience of humanity answer the question.

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#### DUTY SET TO MUSIC.

"Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage."—Ps. cxix. 54.

SONGS are the symbols of joy, the echoes of a happy heart, vehicles are they through which the soul outpours its gladness on the air. The passage strikes on our attention two very remarkable subjects.

#### I. DUTY SET TO MUSIC.

It is certainly not common for men to exult in law. Responsibility is by no means a subject for song amongst

the generality of mankind. On the contrary, it is felt to be a most repulsive thing. It stands in the soul's horizon a huge and hideous spectre, foreboding mystic woes. Oh! to be free from law, to have no connection whatever with the eternal throne of obligation, but to revel in all the free play of our impulses and passions without being accountable to any established authority! this is perhaps the prevalent feeling of the race. And numbers even of those who not only recognize obligation, but earnestly endeavor to discharge it, who are ranked amongst the religious, do not like it sufficiently to throw it into music and song. Duty, even to them, is a pressure under which they crouch to the dust, not a pinion on which they soar into the ecstasies of the spiritual and divine—a subject about which they groan, never sing. The expression, then, of the Psalmist is confessedly uncommon, and yet it can, I think, be shown to be both *most desirable* and *generally attainable*. First: *It is most desirable*. Two things will show the desirableness of this experience. (1) Law cannot be got rid of, and in moral obligation you are bound by inviolable ties; chains stronger than adamant—chains that the forces

of hell through eternal ages will fail to break—link all souls to the throne of duty. You and duty must ever be together; you can no more flee from it than from yourself. It is the root of your nature. It always confronts you in all its majesty, and says to you in the voice of supreme authority every minute of your conscious life, “*Do this and be happy, neglect it and be damned.*” (2) Your connection with it must either be a source of misery or happiness. It will always be shooting the agony of remorse and self-loathing into the quivering nerves of your nature, and darkening the whole sphere of your being with the frowns of eternal justice, or beaming on your souls the animating and cheering rays of self-commendation and ever-brightening hope. One of these two results is inevitable. This, then, being the case, is not the experience of the Psalmist most *desirable* for all? Since you must live with law, is it not desirable to live with it on friendly terms, to make it a companion that shall be the delight of the soul? Secondly: *It is generally attainable.* The desirability will not be questioned; but can the good be reached? Is there a possibility for men who dread law, and groan

with agony at the shadow of its presence and the sound of its voice, to make it a subject of delight, and the jubilant song of life? It is natural to infer the possibility—(1) From the goodness of the Creator. He *is* good. His goodness is the root of the universe, the fountain of being, the soul of Himself; and it can never be supposed, therefore, that He linked indissolubly his moral creatures to a system of law that would render them miserable. The opposite is the necessary conclusion. He intended law to guide the footsteps of the soul into the paths of imperishable beauty and immortal bliss. (2) From the conformity of the principles of law with the constitution of the soul. There is nothing in the commands of the law to which reason and conscience do not yield their intuitive response. But granting the possibility of its attainment, the question is *how*? There is but *one* answer, and it is both *simple* and *satisfactory*. It is attained by a *supreme love* to the Lawgiver. If I love a being intensely, the first question of my mind, and the strongest desire of my heart, is to know *what he would have me to do*. When I discover his will, the delight of my heart is to set myself to the working it out.

Aye, though it prove difficult, and involve sacrifices, I shall rejoice in battling with the difficulty, and in making the sacrifice. The more difficult, the more I gratify my love. Love delights in sacrifice. That wish of the suffering child, there prostrate on his little couch, which is felt by the servile servant hard and painful to perform, is attended to by the loving mother with a rapturous delight. It is love to the Lawgiver that changes duty into privilege, and the decalogue into a triumphant psalm. "My meat and my drink is to do the will of my Father who is in heaven." The other remarkable thing which the passage strikes on our attention is—

## II. Duty set to music IN UNFAVORABLE CIRCUMSTANCES.

"Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." Here in this pilgrim state, with all the discomforts and inconveniences of unsettledness and strangeness, he turns the code of duty into song. And he had good reasons for doing so. First: *Because the sense of duty is our best protection in a world of strangers.* We are pilgrims here surrounded on all hands by men and women of whom we know but little. What is that

which protects our property from their cupidity, our lives from their violence? It is the sense of moral accountability that pervades all classes. Unless men had this they would never feel that slander, theft and murder were crimes. The thief would have no more feeling of wrong than the fox in rifling the cottager of his fowls, and a murderer no more feeling of wrong than the lion in devouring the lamb. No! "thy statutes" are our protection from social wrongs. Civil government would be powerless without this universal sense of responsibility. No system of social order can be based on atheism. Secondly: *Because the sense of duty is our permanent reality in this world of change.* As pilgrims here, we are subject to *perpetual change*. Society around us is changing; the outward world is changing; our bodies, our opinions, and our feelings are changing; but the principle of duty and obligation remains *permanent* and *immutable* within us. It is like a rock in the sea of our souls, remaining the same amidst all ebbings and flowings of our opinions, emotions, and purposes. Duty is fixed as an eternal pole star within us; by it we measure the changes that are going on around us, and by it we can

determine whether our course on the great ocean of life is right and safe or not. Thirdly: *Because the sense of duty is our spiritual power amidst materializing influences.* Matter encanopies and encircles us here in the "house of our pilgrimage." Our tent serves to shut out the rays that shoot from the spiritual. The sense of duty is that power within us which connects us with God and eternity. It is perpetually lifting us up to the great "white throne" of immutable justice and order. Without this power we should lose all impressions as to the nobility of our nature, and be reduced to the common feelings and habits of irrational creatures. Fourthly: *Because the sense of duty, when obeyed, yields the highest delights of our nature.* When duty is obeyed from supreme love to its author, the soul is filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Well, then, might we set duty to music, even in this our "house of pilgrimage." O, come the day when, instead of unholy lusts and amorous wishes, and bloody wars being the songs in the "house of man's pilgrimage," the eternal code of Heaven shall be sung as the soul-inspiring anthem of all!

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#### SPIRITUAL WEARINESS, AND ITS ANTIDOTE.

"Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."—Heb. xii. 3.

ELSEWHERE in a few preceding pages will be found a treatment of the first two verses of this chapter. The text presents two subjects for thought.

I. THE LIABILITY OF CHRISTIANS TO SPIRITUAL WEARINESS: "Lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." There is a danger of growing weary and faint on the Christian course. This danger arises from a variety of causes. First: *The little advancement we seem to make in spiritual excellence.* We read, we study, we pray, and labor to carry out into life the principles of our religion; but, notwithstanding, we feel ourselves so ignorant, so carnal, so wordly, so morally weak, that we get almost disheartened. Secondly: *The little good we seem to accomplish in all our efforts to serve our fellows.* We labor for their good, we give our best energies to their interest, but after many years' self-denying service, how few show by their lives that they have been benefited. In some

cases the men we have sought to bless have cursed us by the falseness of their professions and the base ingratitude of their conduct. We feel weary when we think of it. Thirdly: *The little difference which Providence in its dispensation makes between us and those who are the enemies of Christ.* Sometimes in truth they seem to be far more favored. The wicked prosper. Asaph felt this, and he lost heart; his foot had almost slipped. Fourthly: *The little influence which our best efforts seem to have in correcting the evils of our age.* The tide of error, impurity, and vice, seems to rise higher, and swell with stronger surge, despite of all our labors. Such things as these tend to make as faint and weary. Like the old Israelites, our souls get discouraged because of the way.

II. THE ANTIDOTE OF CHRISTIANS TO SPIRITUAL WEARINESS: "Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself." Reflection on Christ will renew our energies, will re-invigorate the soul. First: Consider *what* He endured: "The contradiction of sinners." Mark the conduct of the Scribes, Pharisees, and Saducees; of Caiaphas, Herod, Pilate, and the

populace. Secondly: Consider *how* He endured: "When he was reviled, reviled not again." (1 Peter, ii. 23.) Thirdly: Consider *why* He endured: it was not for Himself, but for His enemies.

Reflection on Him will make our greatest trials feel light, and stimulate to labor to overcome even as He overcame.

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#### THE QUICKENING WORKS.

"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."—John xx. 30, 31.

EVERY man's life may be compared to a book; and every day adds a page to the biography. Notice—

I. THE RECORD. "These are written." First: *The subjects of the record.* The wonderful works and sayings of our Lord. His deeds were such as no human power could accomplish. The miracles of Christ were performed for three special purposes. (1) As acts of humanity. (2) As proofs of His Divinity. (3) As illustrations of the work



of salvation. Their *publicity* is particularly noticed in the text. These "signs" were done "in the *presence* of his disciples." Imposture seeks concealment—works in the dark. But "these things were not done in a corner," but openly—on the stage of public society. The miracle said to every doubter, "Come and see." The *number* of these miracles is also noted. "Many other signs," &c. Not only are the miracles of Christ recorded, but also His *sayings*. With what dignity, authority, and power does He speak, &c. Secondly: *The mode of the record*. It is by writing. "These things are written." The way by which the Divine will has been revealed to mankind, has been by directing and inspiring certain persons to record it in *writing*. Many advantages are derived from this method. There is the advantage of *universality*. A man's writings reach further than his voice. There is the advantage of *appeal*. "To the law and the testimony" we appeal: this is the judge that ends strife. There is the advantage of *security and permanence*. The word uttered, perishes; the letter written, remains. Everything of consequence we desire to have in *writing*. What do we know of ancient history, but by streamlets that

have flowed down to us in books and writings? Let us be thankful, then, for two great blessings; for the Book—the book written in our own tongue—and for an ability to read it. Let all possess the Bible, read it, love it.

II. THE REASON. That "ye might believe." These things are written that ye might believe—First: *In the real existence of Jesus Christ*. Some have been so sceptical as to doubt whether such a person as Jesus Christ ever appeared in the world. They never doubted the historic existence of such men as Julius Cæsar or Mahomet. Have we not higher authority for the existence of Jesus Christ? They are written that you may believe—Secondly: *In the true character of Jesus Christ*. "That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." He came to redeem men from the curse of a violation of law, and to "redeem from all iniquity," &c. The great object is more especially noticed in the next clause of our text, which is—

III. THE RESULT. "And that believing ye might have life," &c. Some write books for pecuniary ends, &c. But the Evangelist wrote without

any view of temporal benefit to himself, but to bring men to Christ and Heaven. That "ye might have life." Not of course animal or even intellectual life, but spiritual and eternal life. We may however form some idea of this spiritual life by thinking of signs and evidences of animal life. There are at least four signs of life, *sensibility, activity,*

*appetite appropriateness, superiority to gravitating influences.* Have we these signs spiritually?

Take this record, thank God for it. Christ is the substance of it. He is the Gospel, so believe in Him that you may have life—spiritual, ever-growing, ever-blessed, eternal life.

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## The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

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### ORIGINAL SIMILITUDES.

#### *The Life of the Millions.*

The lives of the million are like the path which the fool treads out upon the sands. Though there is every facility for a straight course, his way is winding; though surrounded by the grand in nature, his steps are uninspired by holy wonder and reverent awe; and though deep the impress of his foot, his track is no sooner finished than obliteration begins. Wave by wave the tide advances until it wipes out the last footprint, and the great shore of life appears under the shadows of its majestic rocks and the booming of its billows as if no mortal had been there.

#### *The Glowworm a Type.*

The Glowworm shines only for a short time. For a few nights in

the height of summer her beams sparkle on the green leaves in the hedgerows, and strangely charm the wayfarer on his path. Ere autumnal winds sweep the earth her light is extinguished, and the darkness of winter knoweth her not. Nor even in the summer will she shine after the days of her virginity are over. Maternity quenches her brightness and she becomes dim for ever. Strange insect! thou art a type of many a female professor of Christianity, brilliant in the summer of life, but dim and dark in the after seasons. Many a woman in her maidenhood, who appeared radiant in virtues, shining in the path of usefulness, has become clouded and dark with carnality and care in the years of motherhood and age.

#### *Providence.*

Providence is a sea. Men are

pebbles thrown upon the beach in order to be fashioned and polished, by the waves of successive tides, for the majestic temple of eternity. Whilst all are of one nature, some are larger and more rugged than others, and require a longer time and rougher seas to shape them to celestial forms, and brighten them with the hues of immortality.

*The Diving Bell.*

There are men who go down to the depths of the ocean in quest of treasures. The amount of atmospheric air they take with them, to fan their heaving lungs, and keep the wheels of life going, they exhaust in their busy search. Not a particle do they breathe for laughter or for play. They keep down to the utmost limit of their power, and then come up pale and palsied for reviving quaffs of kind

nature's vital air, and then return to their drudgery for gain.

Many professors of religion act like these divers of the deep. Down into the abysses of worldly engagements they go on the Monday in search of wealth, taking with them just so much of the religious element as will keep them alive during the week, whilst the surging waves of commerce roll over their heads. On the Sunday they appear in the house of God worn and wan, pale and prostrate, unfit for holy labor, panting for life.

*Virtue.*

Virtue in the human soul is like vegetation on the sandy hills, it struggles for existence in uncongenial soil; dwarfish is its growth, few are its blossoms, and less its fruit.

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## Theological Notes and Queries.

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### OPEN COUNCIL.

[The utmost freedom of honest thought is permitted in this department. The reader must therefore use his own discriminating faculties, and the Editor must be allowed to claim freedom from responsibility.]

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4.—As Baptismal Regeneration is now a little up in the public mind, and a great many catch-penny sermons have been published on the subject, allow me to ask, is there any Protestant Church besides the Episcopal that teaches such a dogma?—INQUIRER.

5.—What is the exact idea that we should attach to the word "justify," when used by the Apostle Paul? Does it mean anything more than to make right? If so, what?—F. W. C.

6.—How can you reconcile the

account given of Abraham in Gen. xii. 1, with that contained in Acts vii. 2?—F. R. S.

7.—In Numbers xxii. 5, Balaam is called the son of Beor; but in 2 Peter ii. 15, he is called the son of Bosor. How is this to be accounted for?—PHILO.

8.—Dr. Paley has been severely criticised for defining virtue to be right doing for the sake of future happiness. Looking, however, at the Decalogue and the New Testament, is it not a clear biblical doctrine, whatever conclusions we may have individually formed as to godliness not being the means to an end? "Honor thy father and thy mother, *that thy days may be long.*" Again: St. Paul in writing to the Ephesians, and referring to this commandment, says, "That it may be *well with thee*, and that thou mayest *live long on the earth.*" How is the difficulty

which would exist as to preaching such a doctrine, and its existence on the inspired page, to be reconciled?—FINEM RESPICE.

9.—The fifth commandment is said to be "the first with promise." A preceding one, however, says, "I will show mercy unto thousands that love me and keep my commandments." Is not this a promise?—RENASCENTUR.

10.—In the "Homilist" for September, I find in a *Germ* the following:—"It (the manna) came down in the ark until the temple was plundered by the Babylonians about nine hundred years after." Where is the proof of this statement? I cannot find any record of the pot of manna ever having been put *actually* into the ark; and it is expressly stated in 1 Kings viii. 9, "there was *nothing* in the ark save the two tables of stone."—W. H. COLLIN.

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## Literary Notices.

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[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

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### THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,  
Since none can compass more than they intend.

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HISTORY OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOHN WESLEY. By ABEL STEVENS, LL.D. London: William Tegg.

THE author's opening words in his preface we quote at the outset, to indicate the spirit and aims with which he has accomplished this

important literary undertaking. He says:—"As a great religious development of the last century, affecting largely our common Protestantism, and unquestionably destined to affect it still more profoundly, Methodism does not belong exclusively to the denominations which have appropriated its name. I have, therefore, attempted to write its history in a liberal spirit, and to consider it, not as a sectarian, but as a general religious movement ostensibly within the Church of England—at least during the lives of the chief Methodist founders—but reaching beyond it to most of the Protestantism of England and America. I have endeavored steadily to keep this point of view till the movement was reduced into sectarian organizations." This comprehensive plan indicates on the part of the author a sense of historical justice, a spirit of noble catholicity, and a skilfulness in literary arrangement, inasmuch as it affords an opportunity for introducing into the narrative something of the grandest personages and most thrilling movements of England's religious history. The present volume brings the narrative down to the death of Whitfield, and we are informed that two more volumes will complete the work. This history of Methodism is not a work for a class. Methodists will, of course, buy it, peruse it, and revel in it. Protestants, Christians, and Englishmen everywhere, will be deeply interested in the things it contains. Wesley created an epoch in history; and the organization he set on foot, is one of the chief fountain-facts in the life of modern Christendom. Some of the clearest, most refreshing, and life-giving streams that meander through our spheres of life, gush forth from this source.

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WALKER AND WEBSTER COMBINED IN A DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. By JOHN LONGMUIR, A.M., LL.D., formerly Lecturer in King's College and University, Aberdeen. London: William Tegg.

WALKER and WEBSTER occupy, perhaps, the highest place in English lexicography. Here, we have the definitions of the former, and the pronunciations of the latter, united in one volume, and brought into conformity to the usage of the present time. It contains, also, many new words, and numerous synonymous terms are carefully discriminated. There is an Appendix to the work, which contains "Walker's Key to the Pronunciation of Scripture, Greek and Latin proper names, and a vocabulary of modern geographical names, together with the explanation of numerous contractions and current phrases from various languages, a concise account of heathen gods and heroes, &c." Nowhere else, within



such a small volume and at such a small price, can such an amount of useful and accurate information be obtained. As an aid to those who wish to master the English language and cultivate English literature, it will prove invaluable. The work, which is executed in a scholarly manner, must have cost the learned editor immense labor.

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CHARACTER AND ITS DEVELOPMENT. By REV. WILLIAM MARSHALL.  
London : Hamilton, Adams, & Co.

THE subject of the work is confessedly an important one. Character is the only earthly production that man can really call his own. It is his, for he made it. Nothing else does he carry with him from the earth into the other state. Houses, lands, gold, wardrobes, and even the body itself, he leaves in the dust; but character he bears with him into the invisible, the retributive, and the eternal. As is his character, so is he in the spiritual universe, and before a holy God. Out of character, paradise blooms and hell flames. No subject, therefore, can transcend in momentousness that which is the subject of this volume. A thorough philosophic treatment of it, in a godly spirit and for godly ends, showing at the same time the indispensableness of the Gospel to the production of a good one, is one of the greatest *desiderata* in the religious literature of our age. The author has not exactly supplied this; not because he lacked the capacity—his volume shows the right kind of ability—but because it was manifestly not the precise work he set before himself. He has, notwithstanding, produced a good book. It has the marks of juvenility, not in the sense of weakness, but of freshness, buoyancy, and beauty. The work abounds with thoughts which reach far into the heart of the subject; the language is clear, chaste, and strong; and the spirit is loving, modest, and reverent.

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SONGS IN SORROW AND SONGS OF JOY. By C. H. J. London :  
Nisbet & Co.

WE cannot say that we have an exalted idea of the poetry of this volume. It may be, however, first-class notwithstanding. We sometimes think we have neither the poetic eye or ear. Mrs. Browning is, undoubtedly, a first-class poet: the highest bardic genius was hers. Tennyson, too, of course sits amongst the royalties of his order: and yet we cannot see the beauty or catch the music of *all* the effusions of either.

We have seen even intellectual "Dundrearys" of both sexes dancing with enthusiasm to some passages from these poets, that we could not for the life of us understand. We must, therefore, lack that poetic nerve which is necessary to feel the highest ring of genius. So that when we say we see little or no poetry in these songs, our readers must think of our acknowledged incapacity. The design of the writer is good, although, we think, the theology is often bad, and the spirit sometimes mawkish.

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THE RELIGIOUS ANNALS OF BRENTWOOD. By REV. H. P. BOWEN.  
London: John Wesley.

THIS is the second edition of a work to which we called the attention of our readers sometime ago, and it contains many interesting incidents not found in the former edition. We extract a paragraph to show the style and spirit of the author:—"By means of history, the events of the past are retained; by the records of antiquity, we call back departed ages, and in thought have them over again. We delight in perusing the history of the world at large, still more, the history of our country; but most of all that of the town or locality in which we live, which is our home. Events that have transpired in our own town centuries ago, are full of interest to us all. All history is instructive, but especially the history of religion. The facts connected with the worship of our ancestors, are most attractive to the devout mind. The religious annals of the past should arrest our attention: we should study them so closely as to understand them. By this means we may see their influence upon the present, and their bearing upon the future of our country. Every town has some event worthy of commemoration; almost every village has some name that deserves to be rescued from oblivion. Our own town is no exception to the general rule. There are many incidents connected with Brentwood worthy of record, some names that will be held in everlasting remembrance." The volume is fraught with most interesting facts, arranged with literary skill, and recorded in a diction lucid and nervous.

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A VOICE IN ALL THE CHURCHES. London: Morgan & Chase.

WE scarcely know what to say about this tract: it abounds with disclosures of Church diseases and descriptions of the recipes. There is a deal of strong sense in it and the feeling is by no means acrimonious. The purpose, too, is undoubtedly honest and kind. Ministers of all denominations would do well to read it.



# A HOMILY

ON

## Dreams ;—their Philosophy and Uses.

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“For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed ; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.”—Job xxxiii. 14—17.



OUR subject, whilst it has some difficulties that master our intelligence, has also aspects suggestive of some important spiritual truths. An accurate verbal description of all the variety of dreams, if possible, would be superfluous. All dream, and each knows what a dream is better than he can be told. There are writers who give us elaborate descriptions of the clouds of heaven ; but the clouds are far more grand and wonderful as we see them in endless numbers swell and shrink, brighten and blacken in the sky, than they appear as descriptions in a book. So with dreams. They are more wonderful on the troubled sky of a man's soul at night, than they are in the depicthments of any speaker or writer. They come in every shape, form, and hue. In attitudes fantastic and grotesque, they chase each other with rapidity through the firmament of the soul ; and then melt away into nothingness. Often—

“Dim and faint as the mists that break  
At sunrise from a mountain lake.”

We cannot describe them. All we shall do, is to say a word on their *philosophy* and *uses*.

I. THEIR PHILOSOPHY. Various theories have been propounded in order to account for them, but none have been found equal to a full explanation of all their various types. I have no new theory to offer ; I have discovered no key to unlock the mystery. Two questions remain open for discussion.

First: *What originates the dream.* What, when the man is “lapped in the soft oblivion of unconsciousness,” when the body is still as death in sleep, starts the mind into action? The probability is, that there are more causes than one—that different kinds of dreams have different causes. The cause of some dreams may be found in the state of the body at the time. Aristotle considered that every object of sense produced upon the soul certain impressions, which it made after the senses had closed, and that the perceptive faculty of the mind, recognizing these impressions, woke the mind up to its dream-work. Many examples have been given in confirmation of this opinion. Dr. Gregory relates, that having occasion to put a bottle of hot water to his patient at bed time, he dreamed he was walking up Mount Etna, and found the ground insufferably hot. Dr. Reid, having had a blister applied to his head, dreamed that he was being scalped by a party of Indians. Such instances as these, perhaps, agree with the experiences of most, and show that the state of the body often originates the dream. The cause of other dreams may be found in something that has made more than ordinary impression on the mind. “A dream,” says the wise man, “cometh from a multitude of business.”

“In sleep, when fancy is let loose to play,  
Our dreams repeat the wishes of the day.”

That which has pleased or pained us most—filled us with most anxious thoughts in the day—fancy, uncontrolled, reproduces in the visions of the night. It was thus with

Pilate's wife. Thoughts of Jesus of Nazareth, which filled Jerusalem, had anxiously occupied her mind in her waking hours, and these thoughts gave her most troublesome visions in sleep, so that in the morning, we hear her address her husband thus—"Have thou nothing to do with that just man : for I have suffered many things this day in a dream." Hence dreams are generally retrospective—they are shadows of past events. Like lanterns in a vessel's stern, they throw light upon the track we have cut through the sea of life. The cause of other dreams has been traced to supernatural influence. The ancient heathens regarded them as the production of separate spirits acting upon the human soul in sleeping hours. Baxter, amongst other eminent Christian thinkers, believed in this. There is nothing absurd in it. Are not the spirits of all the generations that have ever lived, living still? May they not be ever hovering around our path and crowding the air we breathe? Do not those who once knew and loved us feel an interest in us still; and is not the soul in sleep more detached from the material world, and more allied with the spiritual than when awake? We know that their forms often flit before us, and may it not be that sometimes they softly touch some spring of the soul which sets the whole mystic machine to work? The other question open to discussion is—

Secondly: *Why do thoughts take such grotesque forms in dreams?* Images often appear to the mind in dreams that are unknown in waking hours, that have nothing like them in the great world of reality. Objects appear, the like of which Heaven has never created. Events occur which never could take place without reversing the laws of the universe. Why are the mind's conceptions so different in the night to the day? Why is the whole scenery of the soul so changed, its heaven and earth so different? I only suggest a reason, it is this. *The mind in sleep is left uncontrolled by the will.* The human mind is subject to what are called laws of association, laws by which one thought is made to rise by necessity out of another, as seed from seed. If the thought is of an unnatural



kind, it will go on producing the unnatural and the monstrous. In our waking hours these laws themselves are controlled by the WILL. In my waking hours I think as I will, I think upon this subject or that in this connexion or that. By my will I crush a wrong or absurd thought in its germ, and by my will I originate others of an opposite and higher class. But in sleep, this will has resigned her sovereignty; the queen herself is sleeping, and lawless fancy has taken the throne. In dreams the mind is left like a vessel without a rudder. The laws of association heave her about in all directions like the swelling tide, and the stormy wind. If a wrong thought comes up in the day, by my will I can crush it as a monster, but in sleep the will is powerless, and from the fathomless depths of the mind, monster rises from monster unchecked and uncontrolled.

Passing from these questions concerning their philosophy, let us notice—

II. THEIR USES. Have dreams no serviceable purpose? Answer they no useful end? Coming upon us, as they do, by almost the necessity of our nature, and engaging so much of our spiritual energies, the goodness of my Maker binds me to believe that they are serviceable in some way or other. What though they—

“Are the children of an idle brain,  
Begot of nothing, but vain fantasy.”

Still they must have some good end to answer. The mists that overhang the hills, and the vapours that curl in the breeze, are of some service in the economy of nature. And can it be that those fantasies of the soul are good for nothing? All analogy unites with creative goodness to say no. What are their probable uses?

First: *They serve to throw some light on our spiritual constitution.* Few things throw more light on the nature and the power of the soul than its own dreams. (1) They show the soul's power for involuntary action. By involuntary

action, we mean action in which the will is not concerned, where it has not been consulted, over which it has no control. There are two kinds of involuntary action, one is right. In obvious peril we involuntarily seek safety ; in the presence of axiomatical truths we involuntarily believe ; in the view of the truly beautiful we involuntarily admire and love. All this we do, not by volition, but by intuition. In heaven, where all are holy in the deepest fountains of their being, and springs of their activity, involuntary action is, perhaps, the rule, and always blessed. But there is an involuntary action that is wrong. It arises from a thorough infirmity of the will, through the indulgence of the passions and long habits of sin. Alas, how many there are who, through a sinful course of life, have lost the "I will" of their being ; that have become the thorough creatures of old associations and habits ; no argument can change their opinion ; no persuasion their conduct. They are borne on resistlessly by the river of their own thoughts, prejudices, and indulgences. They cannot stop ; the will is gone. This power of involuntary action is a terrible power of the soul. Hast thou thought of it, brother ? Dreams show that thou hast it ? It is a power that can make thee miserable in spite of thyself. They serve to show—(2) The soul's power for vivid realization. In dreams the spirit sees the objects with all the vividness of reality. Persons, dead long ago, are seen, and heard, and felt, as if they were in contact with us in our waking hours. In truth, more so. When awake, we see outward objects through our sensations ; but the objects that come to us in dreams we see *directly* face to face. Gardens, bowers, lakes, streams, oceans, mountains, cities, men, women ; in dreams they are always powerfully real. A trial is seldom more distressing to the soul than when it looms in a dream ; an enemy seldom more terrible to us than when he walks the chambers of the soul in the visions of the night. The deepest thrills of the soul are often felt at what we see and hear in dreams. Speaking of a dreaming man, our great dramatist has said,—

“Thy spirit within thee hath been so at war,  
And thus hath so bestirr’d thee in thy sleep,  
That beads of sweat have stood upon thy brow,  
Like bubbles in a late disturbed stream :  
And in thy face strange motions have appeared ;  
Such as we see when men restrain their breath  
On some great sudden haste.”

Wonderful power of the soul is this. It wakes the dead ; it brings the distant near ; and out of its own thoughts plants a paradise, or kindles a hell. They serve to show—(3) The soul’s power of rapid movement. Times and distances are nothing to the soul in dreams. It coasts round the earth, and darts through the centuries in an instant. Departed men are present, and converse with us. Events long since past are transpiring at the moment. We are in scenes a thousand leagues away. We paint our life in an instant ; we do the world’s business in an hour. Wonderfully rapid is the mind’s movement in dreams. Sir Benjamin Brodie mentions the following anecdote of the late Lord Holland :—“On an occasion, when he was much fatigued, while listening to a friend who was reading aloud, he fell asleep, and had a dream ; the particulars of which it would occupy him a quarter of an hour, or longer, to express in writing. After he woke, he found that he remembered the beginning of one sentence, which he actually heard, and the latter part of the sentence immediately following it, so that, probably, the whole time during which he had slept, did not occupy more than a few seconds.” Dr. Carpenter, also, mentions the case of a clergyman falling asleep in his pulpit during the singing of the psalm before the sermon, and awakening with the conviction that he must have slept for at least an hour, and that the congregation must have been waiting for him, but on referring to his psalm-book, he was consoled by finding that his slumber had lasted not longer than during the singing of a single line. Not half the things we see and do in dreams, do we remember. The mind in sleep, like Saturn, devours many of its children as soon as they are born. The rapidity of the mind’s movement in sleep

significantly hints to us of that incalculable expertness of action which will mark its history in eternity. They serve to show—(4) The soul's power of incorporeal action. In dreams the bodily senses are closed ; yet the soul sees and hears, tastes, smells and feels. It sees without the eye, hears without the ear, works without the hands, walks without the feet, talks without the tongue. It often reasons, too, most accurately in sleep. Many men in sleep have solved problems which mastered them in the day ; have written, as in the case of Coleridge, lines of poetry which transcended their genius when awake. Dr. Abercrombie relates that an eminent lawyer had been consulted respecting a case of great difficulty and importance, and after several days of intense attention to the subject, he got up in his sleep and wrote a long paper. The following morning he told his wife that he had had a most interesting dream, and that he would give anything to recover the train of thought which had then passed through the mind. She directed him to his writing-desk, where he found his opinion clearly and fully written out. This power of the soul to act thus independently of the body is, to say the least, an argument in favor of its immateriality, and a prophecy of its capabilities to fulfil its high destiny when the body is dust. Paul's language on the subject is full of meaning, "I knew a man in Christ," &c. Dreams serve to show—(5) The soul's power of moral character. The moral character of the soul, that is, its controlling likes and dislikes, determines the character of our dreams. He whose moral heart is engrossed in sensual gratifications, worldly gains and amusements, will have dreams corresponding to that state of mind. On the other hand, he whose mind is mainly engrossed with spiritual and Divine things, will have dreams of a religious and elevating character. Sir Thomas Brown has well said "that persons of radical integrity will not be easily perverted in their dreams ; nor noble minds do pitiful things in their sleep." If the moral current of the soul flows in the channel of the chaste, the honest, and the godly, it will not mirror images of

uncleanness, dishonesty, or sin. The moral heart is the fountain of all our activities, both asleep and awake ; if that fountain be clean, every streamlet will be crystal.

If dreams throw all this light upon the wonderful nature which God has given us, are they not useful ; are not the ends they answer worth having ? Ought we not to be thankful to heaven for the power to form visions in the night ? Another great use—

Secondly: *They are sometimes the organs of Divine communication.* In olden times dreams were the media through which God was pleased to communicate His thoughts to men. “ If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.” (Num. xii. 6.) God revealed Himself in a dream to Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Solomon, Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel, and others. Some of those dreams we shall have to examine in future homilies. Why He made communications of Himself to man through dreams is a question beyond our solution. Was it because the soul in sleep is more removed from the material and nearer to the spiritual than when awake ? or was it that the soul asleep can hear and observe wonders which in waking hours would paralyze it with terror and awe ? We know not. We know the fact, and we desire to acquiesce in the arrangement, and say, “ Even so, Father, it seemeth good.”

But are dreams organs of Divine communication now ? or where they only employed so in remote ages, and in eastern lands ? Were the men mentioned in the Bible the only men thus honored ? Reason would suggest that God has still intercourse with human minds—in dreams of the night, and in visions of the day. Is the Infinite Father less interested in the men of this generation than in those of the past ? Do we stand in less need of communications of Him than those to whom of old He spoke ? Or are we less accessible to His approaches ? By no means. Hence there is nothing inconsistent in reason, in the thought that God has communications with some men now in dreams. And then, too, there is much



in the experience of some men that tends to attest the fact. There have been men in every age, and almost in every circle, who have had dreams prognosticating with singular accuracy future events, and resulting in issues of high spiritual importance. Instances abound where dreams have been the means of converting wicked men, and of guiding and succouring the good in scenes of perplexity and distress, as in the cases of Colonel Gardiner and Africana recorded by Moffat. I select two from many, that seem to carry with them proofs of their Divine origin ; the one indicating a knowledge of future events more than human, and the other issuing in results the most blessed and Divine. Both are well authenticated. The late Rev. Mr. Bowden, of Darwin, relates the following dream, which he wrote down as he received it from the lips of the clergyman whose dream it was :—"A clergyman, exhausted with the public duties of the Sunday morning and afternoon, retired to his apartment for an hour's sleep in order to refresh him for the services of the evening. In his sleep, he dreamt that he entered his garden, sat down in his bower there to read and meditate. While thus employed, he heard a footstep approaching—he went forth to meet the visitor. The visitor was a brother clergyman of brilliant talents, and wondrously popular. His countenance was covered with a gloom of sadness, and his looks indicated great agitation of soul. His distressed clerical visitor asked him the time of day, to which he replied, twenty-five minutes past four. On hearing this he exclaimed, 'It is only one hour since I died, and here I am, damned !' 'Damned !' said the other, 'for what ?' 'It is not,' said the visitor, 'because I have not preached the Gospel, nor because I have not been useful, but because I have sought the praise of men rather than of God, and I have my reward.' On hearing this, the minister woke from his sleep with the awful dream pressing on his heart. He went forth to his church to conduct the evening service. On his way, he was accosted by a friend who inquired whether he had heard of the severe loss the Church had sustained in the death of their minister. He

replied, 'No,' and inquired the day and the hour when the event took place. The reply was, 'This afternoon at twenty-five minutes past three o'clock.' I accept this fact ; you take it for what it is worth. The other is a dream which a father had, and which led to the conversion of several of his children. "In January last," said a pious father in writing to his friends, "I dreamed that the day of judgment was come. I saw the Judge on His great white throne, and all nations were gathered before Him. My wife and I were on the right hand, but I could not see my children. I said, 'I cannot bear this, I must go and seek them.' I went to the left hand of the Judge, and there found them all standing in the utmost despair. As soon as they saw me they caught hold of me, and cried, 'Oh ! father, we will never part !' I said, 'My dear children, I am come to try, if possible, to get you out of this awful situation !' So I took them all with me ; but when we came near the Judge, I thought He cast an angry look, and said, 'What do thy children with thee now ? They would not take thy warning when on earth, and they shall not share with thee the crown in heaven ; depart, ye cursed !' At these words I awoke, bathed in tears. Awhile after this, as we were all sitting together on a Sabbath evening, I related to them my dream. No sooner did I begin, than first one, and then another, yea, all of them, burst into tears, and God fastened conviction on their hearts. Five of them are rejoicing in God their Saviour ; and I believe the Lord is at work with the other two ; so that I doubt not He will give them, also, to my prayers." Thus, "in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed ; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man."

The subject teaches that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. How great the soul. Brother, what are things about thee compared to thy soul ? Close thy senses, and shut out the material universe. Thou hast still a world within thee. Thy soul is independent of that materialism in which thou art

living, and which hems thee round about. When thy body is motionless in sleep, it can tread the shores of Tartarus, and pace the bowers of Paradise.

“The mind can make  
Substance, and people planets of its own  
With beings brighter than have been, and give  
A breath to forms which can outlive all flesh.”

Once in the revolution of every twenty-four hours that soul of thine breaks away from the material, and holds fellowship with its own spiritual creations, in order to remind thee that it will soon break away from the material altogether, leave thy body to rot in the dust, and spend eternity amidst the wonders of a world of spirits. “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” What? Nothing. To lose the soul is to lose the universe, to lose God, to lose all that can render existence aught but an eternal curse.

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## A Homiletic Glance at the Acts of the Apostles.

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Able expositions of the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, describing the manners, customs, and localities described by the inspired writers; also interpreting their words, and harmonizing their formal discrepancies, are, happily, not wanting amongst us. But the eduction of its widest truths and highest suggestions is still a felt desideratum. To some attempt at the work we devote these pages. We gratefully avail ourselves of all exegetical helps within our reach; but to occupy our limited space with any lengthened archæological, geographical, or philological remarks, would be to miss our aim; which is not to make bare the mechanical process of the study of Scripture, but to reveal its spiritual results.

### SECTION FIFTEENTH.—Acts v. 33—42.

“When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them. Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; and said unto

them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody ; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves : who was slain ; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him : he also perished ; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone : for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought : but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it ; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. And to him they agreed, and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not, to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”—Acts v. 33—42.

SUBJECT :—*The Speech of Gamaliel to the Sanhedrim.*

WE have four things in this narrative that are worth looking at :—Good oratory neutralized by a corrupt audience ; culpable indifference justifying itself by plausible logic ; a rule for testing systems by which the divinity of Christianity is established ; and an example of the unconquerable spirit of genuine religion. Here we have—

I. GOOD ORATORY NEUTRALIZED BY A CORRUPT AUDIENCE. The storm of opposition to the apostles was raging furiously in the Sanhedrim, when one, the most illustrious, of their number stands up to moderate its violence. We have his address here, and in it there are several things which show its rhetorical power.

First : *The ability and position of the speaker.* “A Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people.” The name Gamaliel was an old historic name, honorable in Israel. He was the son of Simeon, who took Jesus in his arms in the temple, and the grandson of Hillel, both famous Jewish doctors. The exalted title of *Rabban* was conferred on him on account of his great wisdom and reputation. He had been at one time the president of

the Sanhedrim, and at his feet the great apostle of the Gentiles studied. A most popular man in the state, too, was he. "He was had in reputation among all the people." Such a speaker's high character and reputation would give weight to his oratory. The speech of a man whose ability has not yet been recognized, and whose reputation is yet to be made, would not carry with it half the power, in an audience, of words not half so weighty in wisdom falling from the lips of him who has won a "high reputation among all the people." The force of a speech on the minds of the hearers is greatly regulated by the place the speaker holds in their judgment and esteem. Gamaliel's speech, therefore, would have this rhetorical advantage. Another thing here which shows the oratoric power of Gamaliel's address is—

Secondly: *The course he recommended.* Had he urged on their acceptance some abstruse proposition, or recommended to them a course of action involving great difficulties and dangers, one need not have wondered at the ineffectiveness of his address; but the course he recommended was most reasonable, and most easy: "refrain from these men and let them alone." A most common-sense course to pursue under the circumstances. There is yet another thing which shows the rhetorical power of Gamaliel's address—

Thirdly: *The argument he employed.* "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it." His argument was—(1) If the movement was *undivine*, opposition was *unnecessary*; it would come to naught of itself. In support of this he does two things, he gives facts and he states a principle. The facts are two; one referring to Theudas, the other to Judas of Galilee. "For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to naught. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed." Who



were these two rioters? This Theudas is not to be confounded with the Theudas mentioned by Josephus.\*

Judas of Galilee is also mentioned by Josephus. After Archelaus (Matt. ii. 22) was deposed from the government, and Judæa was reduced to a Roman province, in the reign of Augustus, a census or enrolment, called taxing in the text, was taken by Quirinus or Cyrenius, president of Syria, to which

\* Theudas was a name quite common among the Jews. Of this man, nothing more is known than is here recorded. Josephus (Antiq. 622, chap. v.) mentions one Theudas, in the time of Fadus, the procurator of Judæa, in the reign of the emperor Claudius (A.D. 45 or 46), who persuaded a great part of the people to take their effects with him, and to follow him to the river Jordan. He told them he was a prophet, and that he would divide the river and lead them over. Fadus, however, came suddenly upon them, and slew many of them. Theudas was taken alive and conveyed to Jerusalem, and there beheaded. But this occurred at least ten or fifteen years after this discourse of Gamaliel. Many efforts have been made to reconcile Luke and Josephus, on the supposition that they refer to the same man. Lightfoot supposed that Josephus had made an error in chronology. But there is no reason to suppose that there is reference to the same event: and the fact that Josephus has not recorded the insurrection referred to by Gamaliel, does not militate at all against the account in the Acts. For—(1) Luke, for anything that appears to the contrary, is quite as credible an historian as Josephus. (2) The name Theudas, was a common name among the Jews, and there is no improbability that there were two leaders of an insurrection of this name. If it is improbable, the improbability would affect Josephus' credit as much as that of Luke. (3) It is altogether improbable that Gamaliel should refer to a case which was not well authenticated, and that Luke should record a speech of this kind unless it was delivered, when it would be easy to detect the error. (4) Josephus has recorded many instances of insurrection and revolt. He has represented the country as in an unsettled state, and by no means professes to give an account of all that occurred. Thus he says (Antiq. xviii. x. 4) that there were "at this time ten thousand other disorders in Judæa," and (8) that "Judæa was full of robberies." When this Theudas lived, cannot be ascertained; but as Gamaliel mentions him before Judas of Galilee, it is probable that he lived not far from the time that our Saviour was born—at a time when many false prophets appeared, claiming to be the Messiah. *Boasting himself to be somebody.* Claiming to be an eminent prophet, probably, or the Messiah. *Obeded him.* The word used here, is the one commonly used to denote belief. As many as believed on him, or gave credit to his pretensions.

Judæa was attached. This Judas became a ringleader of a rebellion against it. This revolt was the beginning of difficulties, which ran on accumulating until Jerusalem and the nation were destroyed in the great war of Titus. This Judas and all his followers, we are told here, perished. Gamalie wished the Sanhedrim to understand that if the cause of the apostles was undivine and merely human, they would perish just like this Theudas and Judas. Having stated these facts, he lays down a principle, which is, *that the human would perish, the Divine flourish*. "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it." The argument is *ad hominem* designed to show that his hearers, on their own principles, were bound to take the course he recommended. They professed to regard the new religion as an undivine thing. They need not therefore go to the trouble of opposing it; on their own view of it, it would soon die. Another part of the argument is (2) If the movement was of God opposition would be *futile and impious*. "If it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." Attempts to crush the cause of God are as futile as attempts to roll back the tides of ocean, or reverse the revolution of planets—worse than futile, it is fighting against God; a mad and impious battling against the Infinite. Another thing which shows the power of his oratory is—

Fourthly: *The impression he produced*. "And to him they agreed." Their judgments went with him. They could not but see the reasonableness of the course he recommended, and feel the force of the arguments he employed.

So far Gamaliel's speech seems powerful, and one might have thought that he would have gained his end, and brought his audience practically to his conclusions. But no, they pursued their course of persecution. "When they had called the Apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go." Now the question is, what rendered this man's oratory so ineffective? It was the *character of his audience*. Prejudice

warped their judgment, and malice inspired their hearts. So it ever is. What boots a good speaker or a good speech, if the minds of the hearers are pre-occupied with hostile opinions and feelings. The rhetoric of a discourse greatly depends upon the mind of the auditory. Hence what is felt to be eloquence in one *audience*, would not be in another. He is the most eloquent man in his sphere who echoes the views and advocates the wishes of his audience. The man who propounds opinions, not agreeing with the general views of his listeners, though he reasons with the logic of Aristotle, and declaims with the power of Demosthenes, will not be felt eloquent. Paul himself was a babbler at Athens. This fact is fraught with lessons both to hearers and to speakers. Let hearers who would benefit from the discourses of the men they hear, free their minds from prejudices, and listen with candour; and let speakers despise that eloquence that comes rather from the low tastes and narrow views and sectarian sympathies of a spiritually-degraded audience, than from the true thoughts and honest arguments and noble motives of a speaker inspired with the truth of God.

Here we have—

II. CULPABLE INDIFFERENCE JUSTIFYING ITSELF BY PLAUSIBLE LOGIC. The course of *non-intervention* which this orator recommends to the Sanhedrim may, perhaps, in some aspects, admit of justification. On the ground for example of *statesmanship*, the policy he recommends might be defended. Earthly rulers have no right to interfere with the religious opinions and movements of the people, so long as there is no infringement of the rights of others. Free thought and action in spiritual matters is the inalienable right of every man; the empire of conscience is sacred to God. Men are permitted to step into it for purposes of argument, but not to legislate or coerce. Or supposing that Gamaliel believed that the cause which the apostles were enthusiastically promoting was not *divine*, a mere superstition or imposture, the policy he recommends might be justified

on the ground of *social philosophy*. The way to give an impulse and a social power to error, is to persecute its votaries. Many an error which would have died at its birth has been nursed into power by harshness and cruelty. Storms of persecution have nursed the absurdest systems into empires, and so they ever will. They are the breath that the devil breathes to inspire and strengthen his own.

But looking at the conduct of Gamaliel and the policy he recommends here in a broad human light, he develops a most reprehensible moral indifference—(1) Because, as a man, he was morally bound to satisfy himself whether the apostles' cause was that of man, or of God. He was not justified in allowing it to remain an hypothesis. By an honest investigation he should have satisfied himself on the question before he presumed to give any advice. (2) Because he had abundant evidence to satisfy himself on the question. The marvels that Jesus of Nazareth had wrought must have been known to him, as a member of the great Council of the nation. The miracles of His death and resurrection too ; moreover, the wonders of the Pentecost, which had just occurred, were present to his mind ; a thousand voices had told him that the work was the work of God. (3) Because, if it was the work of God, it was his bounden obligation to go heart and soul and hand with it. We cannot therefore but regard his argument, as formulated, as an apology for his indifference. In this respect Gamaliel is the type of a large class in every age. Their policy is to allow things to take their course, and settle themselves. They will not concern themselves with the truth or falsehood of things, in order to shape their conduct in relation to them. They allow the whole to remain an hypothesis : it is all "*if*." This is a state as criminal as it is perilous. It is the duty of every man to whom Christianity presents itself, to settle at once in his own mind the question of its divinity. Of all questions it is the most vital and urgent, and it should not be left a moment in doubt.

Here we have—

III. A RULE FOR TESTING SYSTEMS BY WHICH THE DIVINITY OF CHRISTIANITY IS ESTABLISHED. The rule is, that what is divine will flourish. "If it be of God ye cannot overthrow it." We accept this rule, and by it we prepare to test the claims of Christianity to divinity. "Since the Gospel," to use the language of another, "has not been overthrown, but has gone on conquering and to conquer, from age to age, and was never so great a power as at this day, we infer, conversely to the proposition of Gamaliel, that it is of God, and never can be overthrown. It is true, that false systems of religion have spread far and wide, and flourished long in the earth. But they have often relied upon the sword for their extension and perpetuity. They have, too, made a compromise with the passions, and not demanded the pure morals of the Christian system. They have also fallen into perversions and corruptions, from which they could not recover, being destitute of the conservative and self-recuperative energy of the Gospel. Our holy faith has been attacked by every species of foe, open and concealed : by the arm of the persecutor, and the argument of the philosopher : by the doubts of the ignorant, and the sneers of the witty. But it has come forth brighter and purer from every furnace in which it has been tried. It still lives ; it prevails by moral suasion ; it fills the world. Cities and empires rise and fall, but this kingdom endureth throughout all generations." Napoleon Bonaparte remarks, in a conversation related by his friend Count de Montholon, "Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne and myself, founded empires ; but on what foundation did we rest the creations of our genius ? Upon *force*. Jesus Christ alone founded His empire upon *love* ; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him. His eternal kingdom is proclaimed, loved, and adored, and is extending over the whole earth."

Here we have—

IV. AN EXAMPLE OF THE UNCONQUERABLE SPIRIT OF GENUINE RELIGION. This we have in the conduct of the apostles. "And when they had beaten them, they commanded



that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." Observe two things—

First: *Their exultation in ignominious suffering.* "They were beaten." The word here used, which properly means flogging, denotes the severest kind of scourging. It was a punishment regarded as peculiarly disgraceful (*τιμωρία αίσχιστη*, as Josephus calls it). The usual number of lashes was thirty-nine. (2 Cor. xi. 24.) Thus dishonored, and with bleeding wounds, they left the Council, not dejected by grief not saddened in spirit, but *rejoicing that they were counted worthy.* The ignominy they counted honor. This is an experience which can scarcely be explained to those who have it not. The following things may help to account for this sublime feeling. (1) A consciousness of rectitude. (2) A supreme affection for Christ, for whose cause they suffered. It is the law of love to rejoice in suffering for its object. (3) A recollection that their Master suffered in the same way. He was scourged and reviled. (4) A fresh assurance of their genuine interest in Christ. He had told them that they should thus suffer. Matt. v. 11, 12; x. 17—22. Such things as these enabled them to glory in tribulation. Observe—

Secondly: *Their invincibility in prohibited labor.* Though charged with awful threats by the council not to speak in the name of Jesus, they marched forward in their mission with indomitable heroism. "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." No power on earth could break down their holy purpose. They set all human authority at defiance.



# Gems of Thought.

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SUBJECT :—*The Descension of Christ and the Ascension of His Church.*

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first : then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”—1 Thess. iv. 16—18.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Sixty-ninth.

THE Thessalonian Church were, it would seem, under a twofold misapprehension. One was that the final advent of Christ was just at hand. They expected His return while they were yet “alive on the earth.” In truth, the impression that Jesus would soon appear, prevailed extensively through all the Churches founded by the apostles, nor is it certain to me, that the apostles themselves did not participate in this sentiment. “Yet a little while,” says Paul, “and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” The prevalence of such an impression in the apostolic period, is scarcely to be wondered at. Christ Himself had frequently spoken of His coming as an event not far distant. Of all objects in the universe, He was the dearest to their hearts. He was fresh in their memory, for He had only just departed. Many had seen Him before His death ; not a few in the glory of His resurrection body. All heard wonderful things about Him from those who had seen Him. It was natural therefore for their love to desire His speedy return, and what their love desired they readily believed in. Our creeds have their root in the heart, our wishes formulate the tenets of our faith.

The other misapprehension was that the Christians who departed this life previous to His return, would not have advantages equal to those who would be living on

the earth. Those who would be living here when that glorious event occurred, they seemed to feel, would be privileged above all others. Their hearts would thrill to the first distant sounds that would herald His approach, and leap with ecstasy at the first streaks of splendor in the sky, foretelling His triumphal advent. But the departed, they thought, would have no share in this. They would be sleeping unconsciously in their beds of dust, while they were enjoying the raptures of the scene. This heightened their sorrow when one after another of their Christian brethren departed. Though, perhaps, they had no doubt of the coming resurrection, and the ultimate happiness of the departed, they felt that they would be serious losers by dying before the glorious return of their Redeemer. Now, in the context, the apostle endeavors to comfort them under their bereavements by removing this misapprehension. "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." As if the apostle had said, do not sorrow under the impression that the departed will have no share in the glories of the second advent; they will come with Him: they will be as alive to the sublime interests of that period as you will be. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep." The word "*prevent*" here, does not mean what the word means with us now. Like many other words in our language, it has changed its meaning since our translators did their noble work. With us now it means hinder, obstruct. But here it means *precede, anticipate,—prævenio*. The idea of the apostle therefore is, that those who will be living when Christ appears, will not go before or precede them which have departed. There will be no precedence; they will be on equal terms.

The text leads us to consider two points, the descending of Christ, and the ascending of Christians.

I. THE DESCENDING OF CHRIST. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God ; and the dead in Christ shall rise first." The descending of Christ is here spoken of in terms the most unequivocal and positive. It is the language of a man who himself had not the slightest doubt upon the subject, and who felt that it was too generally accepted by the men to whom he wrote to require any argument. "*Shall descend.*" Indeed, our Lord's teaching on the subject had been so clear and full as to preclude almost the possibility of any doubt on the point. (Matt. xiii. 26, xvi. 27, xxiv. 30 ; John xiv. 3.) The two angels who addressed the wondering disciples as their Master ascended, also spoke in such a way upon the subject as to place it beyond debate, at least amongst the first Christians. "This same Jesus which is taken up from you to heaven." No wonder, therefore, that the apostles do not argue the subject, but assume it as one of the most settled things in their creed. Two thoughts are suggested as to His descending.

First : It will be *personal*. "The Lord *himself*." He will come—not a vision of Him, not a representative. He will appear, not as earthly monarchs sometimes appear, by a delegated substitute ; but "the Lord *himself*." "This same Jesus." The same in character, immaculately pure, incorruptibly true, infinitely loving ; the same in person, the God-man ; but the man-nature, not as during the days of His flesh, poor, dejected, mangled, groaning, dying, densely clouding the Divine, but happy, triumphant, radiating all the perfections of the Godhead. "The Lord himself shall descend." He has not forgotten the earth. Ten thousand ages, amidst the glories of universal empire, lessen not His interest in earth. He will visit it again. *Whence* will He descend ? I know not how high His throne is. "He is exalted far above all heavens." *When* will He descend ? It is not for you to know "the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power." Another thought as to His descending is—

Secondly : It will be *glorious*. "With a shout, with the

voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." What do these words mean? The word *shout* (κελεύσματος) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means a burst of excitement, an outcry. What voices make up that shout! What a universe of feeling will be thrown into that outcry? "*With the voice of the archangel.*" In the angelic universe there is a vast gradation—rank rising above rank—the archangel and the chief angel stand at the head of all, next to God Himself. What his *voice* can be, who can tell? It will not be an unmeaning voice, or an unmusical voice. It will convey wonderful things in the melodious cadences of eternity. "*And with the trump of God.*" The trump of God! What is that? Is it put here as a mere rhetorical ornamentation, meaning nothing? Paul is too solemn in mood to deal in rhetorical flourishes. By God's appointment a trumpet was used of old to summon His people to their solemn convocation. (Num. x. 3, 10, 21.) That trumpet was intended, perhaps, as a faint emblem of some tremendous organ through which the Almighty Himself would speak. \* When the Almighty came down on Sinai, there was not only heard the roar of the thunder and the quaking of the earth, but the "voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled." "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised."

Such is the brief but striking description which Paul gives here of our Lord's descent. It accords with representations which are given elsewhere. (Matt. xvi. 27; Rev. xiv. 14.) The text leads us to consider—

II. THE ASCENDING OF CHRISTIANS. "Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Observe two things—

First: *The state from which they ascend.* All the millions of the good, all the numbers that make up the true Church do not ascend from exactly the same position. (1) Some from the *realm of death*. "The dead in Christ shall arise first." The



word "first" here does not mean first in relation to the wicked. The apostle does not mean to say that the good shall rise before the wicked; that may be a truth or not. What he means is, that the sainted dead shall rise before the sainted living are changed. He states this for the purpose to which we have already referred, namely, to correct the error that the departed will suffer loss by leaving the world prior to the advent of Christ. So far from that being the case, Paul says, they shall rise *first*. What millions upon millions will ascend from the realms of the dead! "All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth." (2) Some from the *spheres of the living*. "We which are alive and remain." There will be some alive here when Christ comes. All men will not be mortal. An age will dawn on this planet when the generation will defy death. What will be the population of the globe when Christ appears? I know not. Probably the largest that has ever been found on the earth before. "Those which are alive and remain shall be caught up." A change will take place in them, by which their bodies will become incorruptible and immortal, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."

Such is the state from which the disciples of Christ will ascend. Some from the realms of the dead, and some from the spheres of the living; from the various pursuits and avocations of this mundane state. Observe—

Secondly: *The state to which they ascend*. "They will be caught up together with them in the clouds," &c. The expression "caught up" expresses the application of an external force, that force is the force of God. Clouds here mean *crowds*. The definite article should be omitted, it is not in the Greek; it does not mean that they should be lifted into the clouds, that may be true, but that they should go up in dense crowds, in throngs, "To meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1) The state to which they ascend is a state of eternal fellowship with the good of all ages. "Caught up *together with them*," that is, those who are dead and those who will be living, all brought together in

the immediate presence of Christ. What a fellowship will this be! How large, how intelligent, how holy, how blessed! how fraught with every variety of sentiment and attribute to consummate social bliss! No separations there, "For ever with the Lord." (2) The state to which they ascend is a state of eternal fellowship with the Lord of the redeemed: "They shall be for ever with the Lord." For ever with the Lord, not as slaves, but as free men, not as servants, but as friends, not as combatants, but as victors, not as fallen, but as redeemed, not as dying, but as immortal. "For ever with the Lord," with all that is grand in character, enrapturing in beauty, ecstatic in bliss.

In conclusion, let us use this subject according to Paul's exhortation, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words":—"Comfort one another" under the sorrow of social bereavement. How blessed the sainted dead! They sleep in Jesus. How secure their chambers, how peaceful their repose, how glorious their future! They that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. "Comfort one another" under the trials of your Christian course. Glorious things await you. Struggle on and you will get the victory. Be faithful unto death and you shall receive the crown of life. "Comfort one another" under the disappointments and vexations of life. What though your worldly plans are frustrated year by year? What though fortune seems to frown on your path, and augmenting losses threaten to drag you to a pauper's home? If you are living a Christ-like life the sufferings of your present hour are not worthy to be compared, &c.



SUBJECT :—*Man's Character.*

"For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee? and, What profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin? I will answer thee, and thy companions with thee. Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds which are higher than thou. If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what

doest thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man."—Job xxxv. 3—8.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Seventieth.

**N**OTHING is so important to man as his character. Character is the fruit of his existence, the organ of his power, the law of his destiny. Nothing else is his property, nothing else will he carry with him beyond the grave, nothing else will determine his condition in eternity. These words of Elihu to Job, suggest three things in relation to man's character:—That selfishness is an evil in man's character; that God is independent of man's character; and that society is influenced by man's character.

I. THAT SELFISHNESS IS AN EVIL IN MAN'S CHARACTER. "For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee? and, What profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?" Whether Job expressed this selfish idea or not, Elihu's language implies that such an idea is a great evil. Satan had before charged Job with this selfishness; "doth Job serve God for nought?" Selfishness in every department of action is an evil. But when carried into religious services it has a peculiar enormity. Yet, sad to say, in this sphere it has been prevalent in all ages. It is by no means an uncommon thing for men to take up religion on purely selfish motives. (1) There are some who take it up for mere worldly gain. As religion becomes popular and fashionable in a neighbourhood, the temptation to this increases. Men join congregations in order to increase the number of their clients, their patients, and their customers, and thus enrich their coffers; thus they endeavor to make gain of godliness. (2) There are some who take it up for eternal gain. Their object is to escape hell and get to heaven. Religion, to them, is not the *summum bonum*, is but a means to a selfish end. This selfishness, however it may show itself in a man's character, is an evil. It vitiates every act. Selfishness is incompatible with moral

excellence: the soul of moral excellence is disinterestedness. Selfishness is incompatible with true happiness: true happiness springs from self-oblivion. Selfishness is incompatible with usefulness: all power for good consists in benevolence. Selfishness is incompatible with the spirit of Christ. "He pleased not himself, he sought not his own."

## II. THAT GOD IS INDEPENDENT OF MAN'S CHARACTER.

"Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds which are higher than thou. If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him?" The idea is, that God is too infinitely exalted to have His happiness at all affected by the character of man, whether good or bad. It does not mean that He is too high to observe our conduct, or to be interested in it, but too high to have His well-being affected by it. Let rebels in His universe be multiplied a million-fold, let all who populate His holiest heavens become rebellious and depraved, it would have no more effect in diminishing His happiness than the breath of an infant in darkening the sun. This being the case, it follows that sovereignty must be the principle of all His conduct with men.

First: *It is the reason of all law.* Why does He require us to love and serve Him? Not for His own sake, but for ours. Thus only I can become happy.

Secondly: *It is the source of redemption.* Why did He send His Son into the world? He cannot be advantaged by it. "God so loved the world," &c.

Thirdly: *It is the ground of rewards.* The blessedness He communicates to the good, is given not on the ground of merit, but of grace. He doeth all things according to the counsel of His own will. We can confer no favor upon Him. "He is," says Paul at Athens, "Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." God's only want is, a want to give.

III. THAT SOCIETY IS INFLUENCED BY MAN'S CHARACTER. "Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art ; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man." "*May* hurt." "*May* profit." Nay, Elihu ; rather say *does*, and *ever must*. "No man liveth unto himself." Every action a man performs before the eye of another, is like a pebble cast into the lake. It will spread out in circling waves until it touch the boundary. Every word spoken to another, swells the flowing current of a deathless soul. One man's character is reproduced in another. The sire comes out in the son ; the past generation re-appears in the present. The wickedness of one *must* hurt society ; the righteousness of one *must* profit society. There are at least three things that give every man some influence upon his race. (1) Relationship. Men are not detached from each other like angels, without father or mother. They derive their existence from others, and transmit it again. Each is a link in the chain, receiving and propagating impulses. (2) Dependence. One is dependent upon another for the necessities of physical life, the means of intellectual culture, and the blessings of religion. (3) Affection. We are creatures of social sympathy. Our affections are rooted in others, and their's in us. Thus we derive and give that which moves the world. We are either a curse or a blessing to society. If wicked, we are fountains of poison that will stream out their pestilential influences long after we are gone. If righteous, we are fountains of life, whence rivers to irrigate, purify, and beautify the world will flow down the ages.

Brother, look well to thy character. Seek goodness for its own sake. Worship the Infinite because it is right ; and thus thou shalt truly bless thyself, and bless all who will come within the circle of thine influence. "Add to your faith virtue ; and to virtue knowledge," &c.





SUBJECT :—*God's Counsel.*

"Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath : that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us : which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil : whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."—Heb. vi. 17—20.

## Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Seventy-first.

**I**N fixing the attention upon a portion of God's Word, to inspect its beauties and to seize its great truths, you frequently experience feelings akin to those, when in the twilight of a clear winter's eve you look up into the firmament above your head. First you see one star, it may be a brilliant and beautiful one ; as you watch it, another flashes its rays upon your eye ; then another and another, and many many more in quick and rapid succession, until your whole compass of vision is thickly studded with them, and an enumeration or description is simply impossible. So with the thoughts that rush in upon the mind when its attention is fixed upon the Book of God—the great firmament of truth. This is the character of the passage now under review. A full and lucid exposition of the whole passage has been given in a former number of the "*Homilist*."\* We shall confine ourselves to one of its leading topics—*God's Counsel*.

The term "counsel," belongs to the same category as "decree," "purpose," "election," "predestination," &c. To us they may have shades of meaning ; in God they are one. God's will is God's decree, and God's counsel is God's predestination. Reduced to its simplest meaning, it means God's fixed, immutable plan of action. When Paul and others speak of God's purpose, election, counsel, &c., we imagine they are not speaking of an isolated, detached, extraordinary feature in God's government, but that which is to be found in every

\* New Series, Vol. IV., p 525.

part of it. God has His counsel or fixed plan of action in relation to every part of His universe, and to every creature great and small in it. Here you have it in relation to sparrows. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father." Our text tells us that God has a counsel in relation to His people. What is it? It may be summed up in three propositions.

I. THAT THEIR SALVATION FROM SIN SHALL BE A COMPLETE AND PERFECT SALVATION. This is the avowed design—

First: *Of all His purposes.* Are they chosen of God? They were chosen in Christ Jesus "before the foundation of the world, that they should be *holy* and *without blame* before him in love." (Eph. i. 4.) Are they called of God? They are "called with a *holy* calling;" called to be "*saints*"—" *holy brethren*," (2 Tim. i. 9; 1 Cor. i. 2; Heb. iii. 1.) Are they elected? They are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, *through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience* and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter i. 2.) Are they predestinated? They are "predestinate to be *conformed to the image of his Son*." (Rom. viii. 29.) Are they fore-ordained? They are "created in Christ Jesus unto *good works*, which God hath before ordained that *they should walk in them*." (Eph. ii. 10.)

Secondly: *Of all His promises.* Consult Isa. i. 18; Jer. xxxi. 31, 34; Ezek. xi. 19, 20. Paul employs the promises to stimulate the Corinthians to cleanse themselves "from all *filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness* in the fear of God." (2 Cor. vii. 1.) Peter tells us that the design of God in giving them to us is, that by them we "might be partakers of the divine nature." (2 Peter i. 4.) "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to *cleanse us from all unrighteousness*." (1 John i. 9.)

Thirdly: *Of the earthly mission of His Son.* The great object and design of Christ's mission and death was to take away sin. A mission undertaken and executed by One so

high and mighty, and at such an immense sacrifice, could not be a partial and an incomplete work. Just before His death, with eyes uplift to heaven, He could say, "Father, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." By this, as well as by His almost last exclamation on the cross, He meant to affirm that full and effectual provision had been made for the entire removal of evil. The teaching of the New Testament is very explicit on this point. Consult Matt. i. 21 ; John i. 29 ; Col. i. 21, 22 ; Titus ii. 11, 14 ; 1 John i. 7 ; Heb. ix. 26. By His death we are redeemed from the curse and condemnation of sin ; by His cross the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world ; and by His Spirit "we crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts." (Gal. iii. 13, v. 24, vi. 14.)

Fourthly : *Of the constant operations of His Spirit.* The Spirit Himself is called a Holy Spirit. "The fruit of the Spirit is in all *goodness and righteousness and truth.*" (Eph. v. 9.) His service is identified with a kingdom that is "not meat and drink, but *righteousness and peace and joy* in the Holy Ghost." It is "through the Spirit that we mortify the deeds of the body." It is "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," that God has chosen us to salvation. (2 Thess. ii. 13.)

Fifthly : *Of the heaven which He has prepared for their eternal residence.* The heaven revealed in Scripture, as the future residence of the saints, is a pure and holy one. There, every thought will be pure, every desire holy, every word chaste, every action truthful, every affection Divine. There, the saints will enjoy uninterrupted communion with a God of immaculate holiness and unsullied purity. To do this, they must be pure and holy too. Christ tells us, "The *pure in heart* shall see God ;" and Paul, "*Without holiness* no man shall see the Lord." We might advance many more considerations, and quote many more passages of Scripture to confirm our proposition. Let these suffice.

## II. THAT THEIR COMPLETE AND PERFECT SALVATION FROM

SIN SHALL BE EFFECTED BY THEIR OWN PERSEVERANCE. To the apostle, the doctrine of "final perseverance" was no mere dogma, or arbitrary decree on the part of God, but the certain effect of the laws of salvation, or spiritual life—laws as fixed and certain in their operations as those by which suns and planets revolve, and are kept in their courses. The perseverance of the saints is an essential part of that counsel, of which their complete salvation from sin is the great whole. But what is "the perseverance of the saints?" (1) An increasing acquaintance with God's word; implying diligent examination of God's truth, thoughtful investigation of God's revealed will, careful comparison of part with part, and discriminating deductions from the whole. (2) An increasing confidence in God's promises; implying intelligent trust in Him for full pardon of sin, sanctification of spirit for seasonable and adequate strength in temptation, support in trouble, comfort in affliction, and victory in death. (3) An increasing conformity to the image of Christ; implying the embodiment of Christianity in our lives, making our practice agree with our profession, yielding to Christian impulses, cherishing Christian affections, displaying Christian tempers, speaking Christian words, practising Christian actions. What, is this anything legal, anything extraordinary, anything meritorious? Just the effects of the active laws of Christian life, the golden grain of the Christian germ, the fragrant flowers of the Christian plant, the delicious fruit of the Christian tree, the lovely development of the Christian babe. It is God's counsel that the tree should bring forth fruit, so it is God's counsel that His people should abound in fruits of righteousness, holiness, and obedience. Mark! they bring forth these fruits, and increase in them, not by any independent or inherent power of their own, but by the law of Christian life,—the natural product of the vital sap of Christianity, as much as the fruit of the tree is the natural product of the vital sap of the tree. Hear Paul, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. viii. 2.) Is it the

law of the sun to dispel darkness, and of light to shine more and more unto the perfect day? So it is the law of real Christianity to dispel the darkness and the night of sin, and to increase in power and purity until the meridian of holiness be attained. Now for a few considerations to confirm our proposition, that God secures the complete salvation of His people by their own perseverance. It is confirmed—

First: *By the injunctions of Scripture.* God does nothing without their active efforts. Are they to be forgiven? They must come and reason with God. Are they to obtain mercy? They must seek the Lord while He may be found. Are they to be cleansed from their defilement? They must wash in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. Are they to find rest? They must come to Christ, and cast their burden at His feet. Are they to be saved? They must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Is their calling and election to be made sure? They are to give all diligence. Is their salvation to be perfected? They are to work it out with fear and trembling. Is the devil to be defeated? They are to resist him, and he will flee from them.

Secondly: *By the nature of the case.* To suppose that God could or would effect the complete restoration of a fallen *moral* being without his own activity and perseverance, is simply at variance with all sound philosophy and reason. Can you teach a child to walk without its constant effort and perseverance? Can you educate a youth for a profession or a trade, or reclaim a barbarian to civilization, without his constant effort and perseverance? No more, from the laws of our nature, could God teach, educate, reclaim, and restore us without our perseverance.

Thirdly: *By the example of saints.* Let that of Paul suffice. Did he expect his salvation to be effected without his own perseverance? Read. "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended," &c. (Phil. iii. 13, 14.) There was no one who understood the matter better than Paul, no one more jealous for the honor of God and the glory of His grace. He has been called the "herald of grace," yet what does he



say in the hour and prospect of death. "*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.*" We see, then, that it is the counsel of God, not only that the salvation of His people shall be a complete and perfect salvation, but that it shall be secured by their own perseverance. Can you put steam into an engine without giving motion to its wheels, or progress to its movements? No more can God give a man His Spirit without his constant activity and steady perseverance.

III. THAT THEIR PERSEVERANCE SHALL BE SECURED BY GOD'S OWN BLESSING. There is a strong and striking analogy between God's works and operations in nature, and His works and operations in grace. God has given the seed the principle of vitality and growth, but it requires His blessing, in the rain and the sunshine, for its germination and development. He has given the tree the vital sap, but it needs the light and agency of the sun and atmosphere to make it productive. So with Christian life. God has given us His Spirit, shed abroad the love of His Son in our hearts, but we can do nothing without His constant blessing. But it is a part of His counsel, that His blessing shall attend all the events and circumstances of our daily life, so that each one shall contribute to our stability, growth, and advancement. His blessing attends the services of the sanctuary, and they are made to quicken our spirits and feed our souls, so that by "waiting upon the Lord we renew our strength," &c. (Isa. xl. 31.) His blessing attends the reading of His word, and our errors are corrected, our ignorance is enlightened, our understanding is enlarged, so that we become "wise unto salvation," we "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." His blessing attends our afflictions; they are made to work in us "the peaceable fruits of righteousness," and "to work out for us a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory." His blessing rests upon our trials and troubles; they are made to quicken the development of Christian graces and virtues, so that the trial of our faith worketh patience, and we

can glory in tribulations also, knowing that "tribulation worketh patience," &c. According to God's counsel, His blessing is a solvent that can convert everything, every event, every influence into an element of life, which we may appropriate for our spiritual growth, invigoration, and perfection, securing thereby His one great object and design, our complete and perfect salvation. Here we have the perseverance of the saints based not upon dogma or arbitrary decree, but upon fixed immutable law, the law of Christian life, harmonizing with the soundest philosophy, demonstrable to the strongest reason, and supported by the plainest teachings of God's word. Our argument is cumulative and irresistible.

First: *It is God's counsel that the salvation of His people shall be a complete and perfect salvation.* This is the avowed design of all His purposes, of all His promises, of the earthly mission of His Son, of the constant operations of His Spirit, of the heaven which He has prepared for their eternal residence. This, then, engages and employs all the thoughts and designs, all the energies and operations, all the sympathies and affections of the Triune Godhead. But—

Secondly: *It is also God's counsel that this shall be secured by their own perseverance.* Now, it is the law of that salvation, that where it is once commenced it draws out, exercises, strengthens, and develops the most ardent affections, the strongest impulses, the noblest faculties, and the most unconquerable energies of our nature. So, that by His counsel, God enlists on His side, and employs the mightiest energies, and the most potent influences man himself can command and exercise. Then—

Thirdly: *It is also God's counsel that their perseverance shall be secured by His own blessing.* That is, He will so employ everything in nature, in providence, and in grace, health and affliction, adversity and prosperity, sorrow and joy, comfort and tribulation, success and failure, the services of the sanctuary, the cares of the family, the anxieties of business, the temptations of Satan, the seductions of the world, the infirmities of the flesh, that each one shall be a new impetus,

an auxiliary force, to accelerate their progress Godward, Christward, Heavenward. Hear Paul, "*All things shall work together for good to them that love God.*" "*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us,*" &c. Here then we see all things, all things in heaven, all things on earth, God and angels, devils and men, all made to conspire to the securing of God's counsel, in the complete and perfect salvation of His people from sin.

BENJAMIN PREECE.

*Poplar.*



SUBJECT :—*The Voices of the Soul in View of Sin and of Salvation from it.*

"And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this."—Ezra ix. 13.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Seventy-second.

**U**NDER the influence of a great grief, we have in our text the soul uttering two voices.

I. THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE IN VIEW OF SIN. Conscience says—

First : *That man himself is responsible for his sins.* Conscience makes man own his sins as *his*, as belonging to himself in the most entire sense. "*Our evil deeds, and our great trespass,*" says conscience. There is a strong tendency in man to charge his sins on others ; sometimes on God Himself. Man is ready to say, because sin is in the world, and because no man is able to account for its origin, that therefore God Himself must be the Author of it. The apostle James would have everyone to guard against this sinful tendency. "Let no man say," says he, "when he is tempted,

I am tempted of God ; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." Sometimes he charges it on his fellow human creature, as Adam did. "And he (that is Adam) said, the woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat." (Gen. iii. 12.) Sometimes on the devil. "And the woman said, the serpent beguiled me and I did eat." (Gen. iii. 13.) But an awakened conscience refers not to the tempter, nor to the temptation, neither does it say anything about necessity, nor the influence of circumstances ; but says, with emphasis, "*Our* evil deeds, and *our* great trespass." "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Conscience speaks—

Secondly : *Of the great evil of sin.* Man is prone to make his sins look less than they really are. But conscience speaks of their great turpitude. "Our *evil* deeds, and our *great* trespass," says conscience. Conscience, like the Divine commandment, shows the "exceeding sinfulness of sin." Conscience says—

Thirdly : *That punishment is connected with sin.* "And after all that is come upon us *for* our evil deeds, and *for* our great trespass." There is nothing that distinguishes man from the irrational creatures more than the reasoning faculty and the idea of right which he possesses. There is punishment connected with the transgression of every law of God, both in the natural and in the moral world. Sin committed on earth, if not forgiven, will be followed with punishment in a million of years to come. Man is able to see that death is not an accident, but that it is the result of sin. The constitution of the universe is such that punishment inevitably follows sin in this world, without the direct interposition of God. God has so made His laws, that they punish everyone that transgresseth them themselves. The laws of God require no officer to enforce them ; they will punish the offender themselves. Punishment may also follow sin in the world to come, without the direct interposition of God. Conscience says—

Fourthly : *That sin is not punished in this world according*

*to its ill desert.* "Seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve." The sense of right or justice is still strong in man, notwithstanding his depravity, and when he is in the light he sees that God does not punish him according to his ill desert in the present world ; that God does not administer stern justice to him here. It is true that the crop is not always proportionate to the seed sown, neither is it at all times regular as to time in the present life ; but in the next, it will be proportionate in degree, and seasonable as to time. "For whatsoever a man soweth (in this life) that shall he also reap" (in the life to come). There are two reasons which account for punishment not being in this world proportionate in degree, and regular as to time, to the sin committed. (1) *Because it is a world in which good and evil exist.* We know of a world where nothing but good exists ; and we know, also, of a world where nothing but evil exists. And very often they come across each other, preventing one another from going on in their regular course. Look at Saul of Tarsus. He is on his downward path to hell ; but there, as he goes, the good comes across his way and prevents him from going any further. There is a wicked son on his journey to destruction, but the examples and prayers of his parents are in his way that he cannot well go. (2) *Because there is more mercy than justice in this world.* The scale is never level when there is more weight in one end than in the other. What is the cause of the lightning and thundering in the natural world but the loss of the equilibrium in the air ? So in the moral world, we see it sometimes much disturbed, and that in consequence of there being more mercy here than justice. Justice in this life is like an eternal sea kept within its bounds with only a few streams running over its banks just to show that it exists, while mercy is like an eternal ocean deluging the world. Justice is silent, as it were, here ; but "mercy rejoiceth against judgment." Speaking of the fig tree, "Cut it down," the first year, says justice ; "Let it alone this year also," says mercy, "till I shall dig about it and dung it."



II. THE VOICE OF WONDER IN VIEW OF GOD'S SALVATION FROM SIN. "And hast given us such deliverance as this." This wonder is caused by two things.

First : *By the greatness of the deliverance.* "Such deliverance as this." The deliverance of the Jews from Babylon was great and wonderful. See how God raised up Cyrus for this great purpose, and the wonderful way in which Cyrus conquered Babylon and released the captive Jews. But the deliverance of immortal souls from eternal death is still more wonderful and greater. And of this salvation we mean now to speak. The greatness and the wonder of this salvation is seen in three things. (1) *Its origin.* What a wonderful great mercy it is that God offers salvation to man at all. God never offered deliverance to the angels that sinned against Him ; but He invites man to come to Him and be saved. (Isa. xlv. 22 ; Matt. xi. 28.) (2) *In the way in which it has been brought about.* The way in which the deliverance of the Jews from Babylon was accomplished was marvellous. Think how Cyrus turned the river Euphrates from its bed, and entered the city by night, and conquered the great king of Babylon. But the manner in which the salvation of the world was effected, is a wonder to all the universe. It required the life, the sufferings, and death of God's own Son, to bring about salvation for immortal souls. The human race were captives in the great Babylon of sin. Christ on Calvary conquered the great enemy of souls, and released humanity to a state of conditional hope. (3) *In the vastness of the blessings which it brings to man.* It was a great blessing for the Jews to be freed from Babylon, and brought back to their own country ; but nothing, as compared with releasing a soul from sin and eternal woe, and bringing it to heaven at last—a salvation which not only saves from hell, but gives "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."

Secondly : *By looking at the awful consequences of rejecting this salvation.* Ezra is quite confounded here by thinking of the people's transgression, and the awful consequences that

would follow if they would not repent of their sins, and seek forgiveness of them. (ver. 14.) "But what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God." "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light." (John 3. 19.)

Since we see that sin is a great evil, and that it will be followed with an awful punishment, let us refrain from it. Let us praise God for providing "so great salvation" for us. Let every one at once avail himself of this salvation.

E. JONES.

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## Biblical Exegesis.

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ROM. VIII. 3.

*τὸ γὰρ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου, ἐν ᾧ ἡσθένει,  
διὰ τῆς σαρκός.  
ὁ Θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ υἱὸν πέμψας  
ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας, καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας  
κατέκρινε τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί.*

IN the English version, this passage reads as an incomplete sentence, without any termination satisfactory to the understanding, thus :—

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

Here, there appears to be a nominative, namely, "What the law could not do," without a verb. Several expedients have been proposed in order to get rid of the difficulty. The following way of reading the passage seems to be deserving of consideration.

The apostle has just before called the law "the law of sin and death." From this he is describing the method of deliverance ; that is, the enabling us to walk after the Spirit. How does walking after the Spirit make us free from the law ? The answer to this implied question he introduces by the

particle (*γὰρ*) for. The answer itself, we think, is contained in the words immediately following, as far as *σαρκος*, which, in our way of taking them, make a complete sentence, thus :—

“For what was impossible for the law, in that it was weak, *was through the flesh.*”

In other words, the law appealing only to the sense of rectitude and desert, and not to the affections, failed, because the affections were perverted by the inferior nature, the flesh. The conscience alone is unable to contend with and control the flesh. The law appealing to the conscience, is weak by the weakness of the conscience. But now that the Spirit is brought in, an almighty antagonist to the flesh, we are made free from the law, as a law of sin and death, and with love we obey the Divine commandments.

The following part of the passage, beginning with “God,” makes now another complete sentence.

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## The Chair of Theology.

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“ [This position we have rather been elected to by others, than arrogantly assumed of ourselves. Studious young men, in and out of orders, are adopting the custom of asking us for information and advice respecting a course of theological study, the choice of books, and the like. The thought has occurred, that it would be for their advantage, and our convenience, to throw such remarks as we are able to offer into a systematic form, once for all, that our correspondents may be referred to a standing document.]

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At length we reach the Scriptures themselves, the apparatus for studying them, and the method of using it. We advise the student, by all means, to begin with the Hebrew Bible. Biblical conceptions and Biblical diction are not the sudden outburst of a moment, but the growth of long ages. Go to the simplest beginnings of Revelation, and then trace the course and the enlargement of the stream.

The new Hebrew Grammar by Dr. Kalisch is, in copiousness of reference to passages and in minute analysis, superior even to Gesenius's. But it is so marred by errors of the press as to be rendered almost useless to a beginner. He had

better therefore use Gesenius. Rödiger's edition, published by Bagster, is the best. The most complete exercise book we have seen is Moses Stuart's *Chrestomathy*. The Oxford edition can be got for a trifle at the book-shops.

Van der Hooght's Hebrew Bible is generally preferred: indeed it is the only decent one available. The Bible Society's edition is the cheapest, but Hahn's (Leipzig, 1839) has handsomer type, and a convenient Masoretic key.

For a lexicon you had better, if familiar with Latin, use the Leipzig octavo of Gesenius. If you prefer an English one, you will have to pay thrice the money for Bagster's quarto, in which Dr. Tregelles's notes, intended as antidotes to Gesenius's real and supposed heresies, will sometimes provoke a smile.

Another work, highly convenient to the beginner, and not to be despised even by the advanced student, to whom the opinion of another is often valuable, is the "*Analytical Lexicon*" by Davison, also published by Bagster. It is indeed, Hebrew made easy, containing as it does, not the roots alone, but every form which actually occurs in the Bible, with a grammatical description. It is preceded by an excellent Grammar, a repertory of the facts of the text. This work, which must have cost the author severe and long labor, is printed with wonderful accuracy. It so greatly facilitates the acquisition of Hebrew, that the knowledge of it will probably in a few years be very general as a theological attainment.

In order to make any theological use of Hebrew, a concordance is indispensable. Wigram's "*Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance to the Old Testament*" is very correct, and is peculiarly serviceable as showing the relation of the English version to the original. Fuerst's Concordance has the advantage of giving the old standard definitions, first in Rabbinical Hebrew, then in Latin. It also gives the Septuagint renderings of every word. The passages adduced under each word are printed in unpointed Hebrew. The book is a goodly folio, of great typographical beauty.

The Septuagint version has been happily called a viaduct

between the Hebrew Bible and the Greek Testament. It was by means of this, chiefly, that the theological diction of the New Testament was formed. The student cannot be too urgently exhorted to acquire familiarity with the Septuagint.

Trommii's invaluable "Concordance to the Septuagint" consists of two parts. In the first, under each word, the passages in which it occurs are arranged in groups under the Hebrew or Chaldee words, for which it is used. The student is generally able to perceive at a glance for which Hebrew word or words the Greek word which he is investigating is most frequently employed. In the second part, the Hebrew and Chaldee words are given, and under each the Greek words which are employed in rendering them are stated. The Greek words most frequently used for the Hebrew or Chaldee word in question are denoted by the adverbs *sæpius* or *sæpissime*; numerals being affixed to the others, shewing how often each is employed for the Hebrew or Chaldee. A moment's reflection will convince the student that such an aid is inestimable and indispensable.

Maurer's "Commentary on the Old Testament" is highly commended by Tholuck, as "in acute apprehension of the thought and in exact explanation of the words of the text, far surpassing Rosenmüller." It is in four volumes octavo, and is written in easy Latin.

The most commodious New Testament, for the text alone, is Scrivener's (Cambridge, 1860). It gives the Received Text, printing however all words of which there are various readings in a type different from the rest, with numeral references to the foot of the page, where the readings of Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles are given, omissions being marked minus — and additions plus + and substitutions printed. This edition, together with the Collation of the Sinaitic Codex before mentioned, gives the student the criticism of the New Testament in a nutshell. For a New Testament Grammar, the student can hardly do better than procure Webster's "Syntax and Synonyms of the Greek Testament." For a Lexicon he should procure Bretschneider's. It is the work of an acute and scientific mind and a good scholar.



The meanings are clearly given and logically arranged, with references to passages, much in the manner of a concordance. Great use is made of the Septuagint, and of Philo and Josephus; the author regarding such works as more suitable for his purpose than the classic authors.

Very great help may be gained from Grinfield's Hellenistic Greek Testament, where every verse is illustrated by the Septuagint, Philo, Josephus, and the most ancient Christian writers. Cases, however, will occur in which it is necessary to investigate the classical usage. The best Lexicon, for this purpose is Schleusner's.

The best Concordance to the Greek Testament is Bruder's edition of Schmidt. It is printed on good paper, in clear and beautiful type, and the various associations and usages of words are commodiously pointed out by certain marks. Prefixed are three valuable Indices, with short accounts of Manuscripts, Ancient Versions, and the Fathers and other Ecclesiastical writers.

Trench's Synonyms of the New Testament, First and Second Part, is indispensable. Additional help on the Synonyms will be found in Webster's work already mentioned.

Suicer's Thesaurus, although a Dictionary, constitutes in effect the best existing commentary on the New Testament. It brings together and condenses within the compass of two folio volumes, the mind of the oldest and best Greek fathers and commentators. There are but few verses for which, on consulting the index, elucidation may not be found. It is a far from contemptible substitute for the works of the Fathers themselves. Besides the words of the New Testament, it embraces many of the Old, the terms of the ancient theology, of the various heresies, and of ritual.

Provided with this apparatus, the student will find but little use for a Greek Testament with a Commentary. The chief service it can render, besides archæological information, may be either to assure him that he has made no important omissions in the consideration of particular passages, or to suggest something which has escaped him. The best Commentary on the New Testament consists of the Concordances,

and of the passages selected from the Hellenistic writers and the Fathers, by the above authors.

There is, however, a Commentary which it would be almost a sin to omit. We mean the celebrated work of Bengel, entitled, "Gnomon of the New Testament, in which from the native force of the words, the depth, harmony, and healthfulness of the heavenly meanings is indicated." This invaluable work was written in Latin, and the original may be had cheap; but as the style is rather difficult, some students will find it convenient to procure, though at greater expense, the good translation published by Messrs. Clark, of Edinburgh.

The suffrages of educators and advisers of youth are, in the matters of Greek Testaments with Commentaries, divided between Alford's, Webster and Wilkinson's, and Wordsworth's. Alford's displays considerable reading, but is not perfectly digested. His tendencies are towards what are termed "broad" views. Webster's Commentary does not take so wide a range, but within its range is better condensed, manifests acquaintance with the niceties of Greek, and throws new grammatical light on many passages. The apparent fault is a greater dread of offending against popular orthodoxy than Catholic theology. Wordsworth's is compact, very carefully done, and displays a vast amount of learning. The spirit is that of Church orthodoxy, with, possibly, a leaning here and there to more modern, and less well-grounded conceptions.

Calmet's Commentary on the Bible, in French, in twenty-six volumes, quarto, should be obtained, if possible. Calmet was a first-rate scholar of the old school, which had profounder, if not wider, learning, and less self-conceit, than the modern. His work is valuable for its thorough treatment of difficult passages, on which it gives the sentiments of the best ancient and modern writers, and shows which are to be preferred. It, also, contains a great amount of archæological information, and the numerous dissertations on various curious, or important questions of difficulty, are monuments of learning and judgment.

# The Christian Year.

BY A CLERGYMAN.

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## *Advent.*

“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”—Rom. xiii. 11.

GOSPEL exhortation ever grows in earnestness and urgency. It ever points towards the future. The motives for Christian holiness are always becoming more powerful. As time advances it brings ever weightier reasons for watchfulness. Sometimes, a season of privilege, long promised, hoped and waited for, is represented as at last arrived. Thus St. Paul in 2 Cor. vi. 2 founds an exhortation to the due and profitable reception of the grace of God, on the arrival of the period predicted by the prophet Isaiah as “*the accepted time and the day of salvation.*” It is quite a mistake to quote this passage, as is sometimes done, to show the necessity of beginning at once the work of repentance, and of the service of God, as if the apostle intended to urge us to improve the present, since we are not sure of the future. Such an exhortation is, of course, based on truth and is of exceeding importance. But it is not, for all that, any the more desirable to purchase it at the price of misrepresenting a passage of Scripture. The apostle is here contrasting the present, not with the future, but with the past. He says that the promised season of Divine favor and succour has at last arrived. Isaiah (xlix. 8) says: “*Thus saith the Lord, in an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee.*” Quoting the words, the apostle says: “*Behold now is the accepted time: behold now is the day of salvation;*” now under the Christian economy. Nothing can be plainer than his meaning, or that the manner in which the passage is too commonly cited, is founded on a miserable

misapprehension. It is always far better to preserve the meaning of Scripture, than to use it remotely from the intention of the writer, though the sense we put upon it may be important and our design may be good. But to return.

As in the passage referred to in 2 Cor., the apostle uses the arrival of a hoped-for season as an inducement to the due reception of God's gift, so in our text he urges the increased nearness of the promised future blessing as a reason for watchfulness. "*And that,*" or "*and this,*" that is the duty to which I exhort you, do, "*knowing the time, that the hour is come that we should awake out of sleep ; for now is our salvation nearer, than when we believed.*"

When the Roman Christians first believed the Gospel, they received a promise of *salvation*. *Salvation* is a very comprehensive word ; it includes deliverance of the Church and every member of it from all evil ; it embraces the sum of all the blessings which God confers on them through Christ. Now this salvation is always in progress. It is every day nearer. We shall if we are wise watch the signs of its time. We cannot indeed *know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power*. We cannot know the precise time when our deliverance will be accomplished, or when one of the promised blessings will be conferred. But we can and we ought to watch the indications of the progress of the Divine plan. We can and we ought to *discern the signs of the time*. And seeing that *salvation* is constantly drawing nearer, our watchfulness ought to increase in proportion.

First: *The season of the triumph of the Gospel is approaching.*

The prophets predict, in the most glowing words which have kindled the hopes of the Catholic Church in all ages, a time when the Gospel shall not only be universally preached, but everywhere believed and everywhere obeyed. In the time of the apostles, nothing would have seemed more improbable to mere human judgment than the general prevalence of their doctrine. In faith they proclaimed it, in faith they

suffered for it, and in faith they died. They relied on the Divine promise, they confided in the power of the truth itself, and in its fitness to human nature and human necessity. Since their time, the progress of the truth has been greatly hindered by human infirmity, especially by the shameful corruption and slothfulness of the Church. Yet progress there has been, progress great and encouraging. Now, the faith of Christ prevails amongst the foremost nations, and every generation obtains some new advantage. Now, we might safely predict, even on the ground of mere human probability, the universal spread of this faith and its final triumph over the obstinacy of the Jew and the darkness of the heathen. "*The night is far spent, the day is at hand.*" Even now the dawn is on the Eastern hills. Already the tops of the mountains have caught the golden beam, and presently there shall rise on all men a vision of glory.

If then the Gospel is soon to triumph, let us act worthily of it. It is a system of justice and mercy, of purity and peace. These are soon to prevail. Let us strive more earnestly to anticipate their prevalence by shewing them forth in our own lives. Let us strive to promote them amongst others.

Secondly : *The season of Christ's Second Advent is approaching.*

The Old Testament is one great prediction of Christ's Advent, which the New Testament has but partially fulfilled. We are still in expectation. Ever since the apostles on the Mount Olivet gazed up into heaven after their vanished Lord, the Church has been yearning for His return. Our treasure is not on earth, but in heaven, and thither we look for His re-appearance. It is a solemn thought that we are now eighteen centuries nearer to that glory than were the apostles, and that every Advent season which passes takes one more from the limited number to elapse ere the Very Advent which they foreshow. In view of this prospect, the disposition of the Church should be anxiety for readiness and fitness to meet the Lord. And the same should obtain



in every member. No habits of life, of speech, or of thought, should be indulged, which would call forth His disapproval. Every act should be performed, every word spoken, every thought encouraged, which He has enjoined. Slothfulness must be shaken off, and we must stand ready for inspection.

Let us endeavor to rise to the sentiment of the Collect for this day, which, in grandeur and beauty of expression, and in fulness and weightiness of meaning, is unsurpassed by any other in the Book. O, brethren! how much benefit, and how much pleasure do we lose, as many as pass through the service of the Church lightly and carelessly! Let us not shew ourselves unworthy of the Book by cold, unappreciating use of it. If we made it a study, receiving its meaning into our minds and hearts, coming to Church would be a means of our highest and most exquisite pleasure, as well as sanctifying and guiding our lives. Those who neglect the prayer-book little know what is its capacity for strengthening the mind with the most wholesome and noblest nourishment, for the culture of personal godliness; how, in simplicity, it is fitted to the child; and in profundity, surpasses the faculty of the wise; how far superior it is to any modern preaching, which too often undoes the work of the service which it follows, falling as far short of it, in soundness of doctrine, as in strength of thought, and beauty of diction.

Thirdly: *The season of our departure is approaching.*

The nearness of death is what no thoughtful mind can contemplate without seriousness. It is probable, with regard to many of us, that we have already lived the larger portion of our time in this world. We shall none of us live very much longer, and some may depart very soon. Every day we pass leaves a day less for this world, and brings us a day nearer the solemn moment when we shall be lying powerless, our faculties growing dimmer and dimmer; when we must leave the old familiar mode of existence, our accustomed haunts and occupations, and go forth into a new and untried scene; when the disembodied soul will have an awful interview with the Great God, make a just retrospect of life, and

receive its sentence for eternity. If we are Christians indeed, that solemn moment will find us in peace, for Christ has robbed death of his sting, and will give us the victory. Soon will the body of death be relinquished, and temptation be no more. Soon shall we enter *the house not made with hands*, exchange the imperfection of faith for the perfection of sight, join the fellowship of those who are resting in Christ, and love and serve better than we have done here. A few more risings and settings of the sun, and he will rise on us the last time, and this earthly night shall be succeeded by eternal glory. *And, that knowing the time, that now is the hour for us to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.*

Sleep or slothfulness is the sin which is the most familiar to the Christian. It is the opposite to that watchfulness which is so often inculcated by the Lord. It is always blameworthy as an unprofitable state of inactivity, and it sometimes betrays to worse offences. The sins specified by the apostle in the words following the text, are those of intemperance, uncleanness, and breaches of brotherly love; vice public and social; vice private; and that discord which sometimes rages in the very Church. Let us awake out of sleep; put off the works of darkness, and array ourselves in the apparel of light; in the *armour* which becometh soldiers fighting their way to heaven. Let us, by an act of the spirit, an act, the most inward, personal and resolute, an act constantly renewed, *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*; that is, put ourselves in the most intimate connexion with Him, breathing His very Spirit, copying His example, trusting His mercy. In this way, and in this way only, shall we be ready whenever the approaching, and decisive change arrives. If we put on the Lord Jesus Christ, death will be our *salvation made certain*; and the Second Advent will be our *salvation accomplished*. God grant to us all that we may then rise to the life immortal!

# The Preacher's Finger-Post.

## PERSONAL CHRISTIANITY.

"Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord."—Acts xi. 23.

THREE things are worthy of notice. "Who, when he came." Who is the person referred to here? It was Barnabas, a man described in verse 24 as a "good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." First: *The scene* from which Barnabas is sent. It was Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judæa, arrayed in the Jewish mind with the religious association of ages. Here the Gospel had been preached, thousands had been converted, and a Church was formed—the grand mother-church. Secondly: *The scene to which* he was sent. It was Antioch, at that time one of the most powerful cities of the East, the centre of immense influence. Thirdly: *The reason why* he was sent. The Gospel had been preached in Antioch, "and a great number there believed and turned to the Lord." This glorious fact reaches the mother-church at Jerusalem, thrills its heart with interest, and Barnabas is sent forth to sanction, nourish, and direct the new life. The

text suggests four thoughts in relation to personal Christianity.

I. That personal Christianity IS ESSENTIALLY IDENTIFIED WITH DIVINE GRACE. "The grace of God." He saw Divine grace in the conversion of the Gentiles, and the new life developed through the preaching of the Gospel. First: Personal Christianity *originates* in Divine grace. "Of his own will begat he us, &c." Secondly: Personal Christianity is *sustained* by Divine grace. It is nourished, strengthened and perfected in the soul by grace. Thirdly: Personal Christianity is a *reflection* of Divine grace. Wherever there is true personal Christianity, there is the highest display of the loving heart of God.

II. That personal Christianity, WHEREVER IT EXISTS, IS AN OBSERVABLE FACT. "Barnabas saw it at Antioch." Personal Christianity is not an inoperative sentiment, not a candle that can be concealed under a bushel. It must reveal itself. First: The *ruling spirit* of life is new. There is a new heart. Old things are passed away. Secondly: The *master-purpose*

of life is new. The aim is, not to serve sense or self, or the world, but to glorify God in everything. Thirdly: *The prevailing conduct* of life is new. It is the characteristic of converted men that they are about their Father's business.

III. That personal Christianity IN ITS EXTENSION, DELIGHTS THE HEART OF THE GOOD. "Barnabas was glad." There is nothing so adapted to gladden the heart of a truly devout and philanthropic spirit, as the extension of Christianity in the world. They know that as that spreads—First: *The world's happiness will be promoted.* It is the only power that works off evils—social, political, and moral. Secondly: *God's character will be revealed.* It clears away from the mind the cloud that conceals the moral beauty of the great God of the universe.

IV. That personal Christianity REQUIRES ON BEHALF OF ITS SUBJECTS THE MOST PERSEVERING EFFORT. He "exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." (1) There are many forces to separate us from the Lord; remnants of corrupt feeling within us, corrupt social influence around us, &c. (2)

These forces can only be counteracted by the most strenuous efforts,— "purpose of heart." There must be watching, praying, running, &c.

Brother, though thy Christianity is of the "grace of God," that grace has made its growth and continuance dependent on thine efforts. With an invincible purpose, adhere to the Lord; hold on with the tenacity of thy being to the truths of His Word, and the promises of His love.

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#### PHASES OF THE GOSPEL.

"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."—Acts xiii. 46.

THE preceding verses of this chapter contain a long discourse, full of historic truth and practical point, delivered by Paul to the Jews at Antioch. The immense excitement which his ministry caused in this city, filled the Jews with envy, "And they spoke against those things, which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming." Opposition never intimidates great natures in a good cause. On the contrary, it brings out their manhood in defiant attitudes. Hence we

are told that Paul and Barnabas waxed bold. In the text we have three things.

I. THE GOSPEL OFFERED BY A DIVINE PLAN. "It was necessary," said the apostles to those unbelieving and persecuting Jews, "that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you." Necessary? What made it necessary? The purpose of Christ. He commanded "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." The Jews were to have the first offer. There were good and wise reasons for this. Their offer to the Jew "first," was—First: *The strongest proof of the sincerity of their own faith.* The Jew lived on the very scenes where the great facts of Christianity occurred. They were eye-witnesses of the whole. Their offer to the Jew "first," was—Secondly; *The strongest proof of the mercifulness of their system.* The loving germs of their religion came out in this. The Jew was the greatest sinner; the Jews crucified the Lord of life and glory. Christ's true ministers, in offering the provisions of the Gospel to man, are directed by Divine plan. There is no caprice or accident in their movements. In the text we have—

II. THE GOSPEL REJECTED BY AN UNBELIEVING PEOPLE. "Seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life." Judge yourselves unworthy! Is not this withering irony? The Jew think himself unworthy of eternal life! Proud spirits; they considered nothing too good in heaven or earth for them; they felt themselves worthy of heaven's choicest gifts. First: *Man's conduct is his true verdict upon himself.* A man is not what he may think he is, or say he is, or what others may judge he is, but is what his conduct is. His every-day life pronounces the true sentence upon himself; the only sentence that conscience will accept. Secondly: *By rejecting the Gospel, a man's sentence upon himself is terribly awful.* "Unworthy of eternal life." The man who rejects the Gospel declares, by that very act, his thorough unworthiness, unfitness for eternal life. He dooms himself to eternal death. In the text we have—

III. THE GOSPEL PROMOTED BY EARNEST MEN. "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles." We have no time to lose. Souls by millions around us want the salvation we are commissioned to offer. We have offered it to you. You have rejected it. Adieu, we



hasten to other spheres. "We turn to the Gentiles." Two things are suggested here. First: *A lamentable condition for a people.* These unbelieving Jews are left; the apostles turn from them. The Gospel is withdrawn. A greater calamity this to a people, than if the sun went down and left their heavens in sackcloth. Mercy will not always continue with the people. "My spirit shall not always strive with man." Secondly: *An obvious duty for a ministry.* It was right for these Gospel-laborers to leave a rocky, sterile and unproductive soil, and try elsewhere. Their field is the world. Ministers are not only justified, but often bound to leave their sphere of labor. That ministry which is unsuccessful in one sphere, is often gloriously prosperous in another. These apostles wrought wonders amongst the Gentiles.

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#### MORAL RELAPSE AND MORAL ADVANCE.

"Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."—Acts xiv. 22.

THIS verse states a portion of the work which Paul and Barnabas did on their return to Lystra, Iconium, and

Antioch, and it suggests two things.

I. THE DANGER OF MORAL RELAPSE. Why else did they return to those who had accepted the Gospel? "I confirm," &c. Confirming means strengthening. (Επιστηρίζοντες.) The word has no reference whatever to the religious rite, which is now called *confirmation* in some churches. Wherever the scriptural authority for such a rite is found, it is not here. The work here done by the apostles was not ceremonial, but moral,—the infusing of new energy into the faith of the disciples. The word "and" is not in the original, and should be omitted. The meaning of the sentence is—the apostles confirmed the souls of the Gentiles by exhorting them to continue in the faith. This work of the apostles indicated the liability of the disciples to relapse. Such a liability, alas, exists. First: *Good men are subject to influences inducing a relapse.* Secondly: *There are instances of good men in all ages who have relapsed.* Hence the importance of the work of strengthening men's souls by exhortation. There is a ministry required, not only to bring men into the faith, but to keep them in it. The verse suggests—

II. THE CONDITION OF MORAL ADVANCE. "We must through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God." As a rule, difficulty and trial are the conditions of advancement in every department of life. Generally physical competence and social influence come as the result of great struggle, and much vexatious labour. Intellectual eminence is also reached in this way. Mental culture, wealth and power are never gained but through

much tribulation, and a great weariness to the flesh. It is always so in spirituals. Peace of conscience, purity of feeling, nobility of purpose, force of character, are gained through an agony amounting to a crucifixion. Christ Himself was made perfect through suffering. "Our light afflictions which are but for a moment," &c. Look to the upper heavens. Behold the ranks of redeemed men. Whence came they? They came out of great tribulation.

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## The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

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### GREAT FRENCH PREACHERS.

To those who have a facility in the language, we commend the the careful study of the French pulpit; for to speak of preaching, and not to name the time of Louis the Fourteenth, would be like discoursing of sculpture without allusion to the age of Pericles. Considered as a product of literary art, the sermon never attained such completeness, beauty and honor, as at this period. Our remark must not be taken apart from our limitations. We do not say it was the most apostolic, the most scriptural, or the most fitted to reach the great spiritual end of preaching; the results show that such was not the fact. But viewed in relation to letters, logic, and eloquence, as a structure of genius and taste, the French sermon, in the hands of its great orators, had a rhetorical perfection as distinctly marked as the Greek drama. We

are constrained to look upon it in much the same light. The plays of Corneille and the victories of Turenne were not more powerful in penetrating the public mind, than the oratory of Notre Dame. Rank and fashion, including royalty itself, thronged the church, as if it were a theatre, wondering and weeping. Madame de Sevigné, the best painter of her age, speaks of a *belle passion*, as the Good Friday sermon was called, just as she speaks of the Cid. The greatest scholars and critics of the Augustan era of France, saw their idea of faultless composition realized in the pulpit. The culmination of the art was rapid, and the decline soon followed. No one will claim more than a few names for the catalogue of masterly French preachers; Bourdaloue, Bossuet, Fenelon, Massillon, Fléchier. Many who had a temporary vogue in their day, have been forgotten; but these

sustain the ordeal of time. We shall offer a few remarks on some of them, but chiefly on the unapproachable triumvirate. To

### BOURDALOUE

is unhesitatingly given the honour of having raised the French pulpit at once to its greatest height. The judgment of our day is coming more and more to acquiesce in the decision which ranks him clearly first. We may see in *La Bruyère* how degenerate preaching had become before his day. It was florid, quaint, affected, perplexed with divisions, and overlaid with impertinent learning. He restored it to reason and to nature. No misapprehension can be greater than that which imagines Bourdaloue to have been a man of show, a gaudy rhetorician, or a declaimer. He was, of course, a strenuous Papist, he was even a Jesuit; but assuming his Church to be right, there never was a more unanswerable reasoner in her behalf. It is reasoning, above all things else, which is his characteristic. Seldom does he utter even a few sentences without a connected argument. The amount of matter in his discourses, which are sometimes very long, is truly wonderful. His power of condensation, his exactness of method, his singular clearness, and his animated force, enable him to throw an elaborate argument into a single head. The glory of his art is his magical ability to clothe the subtlest reasoning, in diction so beautiful, as to captivate even the unthinking. In our view, his sermons are a study for the young logician. Even when he is defending the extremest errors of Rome, as in his discourse on the saving merit of alms, we feel that we are in the hands of a terrible antagonist. Amidst passages of incomparable fire he seems constrained to indulge his propensity

for laying a train of proofs. Thus in his passion-sermon, on the power of the cross, he inserts in the first and greatest part, a series of admirable arguments for the truth of Christianity.

In some points which concern the outward form of the discourse, Bourdaloue left much to be reformed by his great successors. His divisions are bold and numerous, and are stated not only with openness, but with a repetition which we have seen nowhere else. So far from hiding the articulations of his work, he is anxious that they should be observed and never forgotten; but he so varies the formulæ of partition, and so beautifies the statement of transitions, by ingenious turns, that the mind is gratified by the exquisiteness of the expression. It had been the fashion to quote the Fathers very largely. Bourdaloue retains this practice. He even seems to wish that his whole performance should rest on citations; and some of them look like centos from Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine, and Gregory. But his management of this is graceful and masterly. And it is entertaining to observe with how rich and eloquent an amplification he will paraphrase and apply one of these little Latin sentences, often bringing it in again and again to close some striking period, and making ring it on the ear with happy vehemence at the climax of a paragraph.

If the observation be modified by our protest against the enormities of Popish falsehood, we are willing to say that Bourdaloue was eminently a spiritual, warm, and edifying preacher. Upon the sufferings of Christ, the love of God, the vanity of the world, and the delights of heavenly contemplation, he speaks with a solemnity and an unction, which explain to us the admiration felt for him by

Boileau and other Jansenists. The manner in which Bourdaloue pronounced his discourses must have had a power of incantation to which even their greatness as compositions gives us no key. It was his remarkable custom to deliver his sermons with his eyes closed; and he is so represented in his portrait. On coming from the provinces, to preach in the Jesuit Chapel in Paris, he was at once

followed by crowds of the highest distinction; and his popularity increased to the very close. For thirty-four years he was equally admired by the court, by men of letters, and by the people. To the Christian visitor in Paris, there is something solemn in the church of St. Paul and St. Lewis, to approach the tablet with the simple inscription, *HIC JACET BOURDALOUE*.

DR. ALEXANDER.

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## Theological Notes and Queries.

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### OPEN COUNCIL.

[The utmost freedom of honest thought is permitted in this department. The reader must therefore use his own discriminating faculties, and the Editor must be allowed to claim freedom from responsibility.]

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#### BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 4, p. 236. The Rev. W. D. Harris, Baptist Minister of Camden Town, has recently published (Hall, Smart, & Allen) a Lecture in which he endeavors to show that Baptismal Regeneration is taught in Nonconformist Churches generally. But what Nonconformist *really* believes in the dogma, or sensible Churchman either?

#### THE WORD "JUSTIFY."

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 5, p. 236. In Rom. iv. 2, we read, "If Abraham were *justified* by works," &c., and a little after, "It was counted unto him for righteousness." This seems to imply that to *justify* is to *reckon righteous*. Again, in Rom. viii. 33, 34, we read, "It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" Here justification and condemnation are evidently contrasted.

#### ABRAM'S MIGRATION.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 6, p. 236. The part of Chaldaea in which Ur lay, was in Mesopotamia. In obedience to the Divine command, Abram left Ur for Canaan, and stayed at Haran on his way.

#### BALAAM.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 7, p. 237. It is merely another way of writing the Hebrew word, which cannot be precisely represented in Greek characters at all. Neither *Bawp* nor *Boorp* exactly hits the mark. The former is the reading of the Septuagint, and of some copies of 2 Pet. ii. 15. In English letters the original Hebrew might be approached by B'ghor, or B'ngnor, or B'chor. The fact is, the second consonant, the sound of Ayin, does not exist in Greek, and without considerable practice is unexecutable by an English throat.

## DISINTERESTED VIRTUE.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 8, p. 237. The difficulty would, perhaps, be removed, if we remembered habitually that the physical destinies of men are decided according to the laws of moral retribution. Self-love is as ineradicable from our nature as any other original instinct, and we are unacquainted with any respectable theory of morals which excludes it from the essence of virtue. Even the crude "love to being in general" of Edwards, would include self-love.

## THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 9, p. 237. You have misquoted the text. Exod. xx. 6,

reads "and shewing mercy," &c., which is not in the form of a promise, though a promise may be said to be implied.

## THE MANNA.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 10, p. 237. In Heb. ix. 4, "wherein was the golden pot that had manna," is part of the description of the original condition of the ark. If the manna was not in the ark in the time of Solomon, then it must have been removed. Probably it had been put into the treasury, along with the Book of the Law, which Moses commanded (Deut. xxxi. 26) to be put *in the side of the ark*, but which, in the reign of Josiah, was found in the treasury. (2 Chron. xxxiv. 14 15.)

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## Literary Notices.

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[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

## THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,  
Since none can compass more than they intend.

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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF STEPHEN CHARNOCK, B.D.; with an Introduction by REV. JAMES M'COSH, LL.D. Volume II. Edinburgh: James Nicol. London: James Nisbet & Co.

CHARNOCK we regard as amongst the most illustrious of the Puritan Divines. In natural abilities he had but few equals. He had an intellect penetrating in vision, dexterous in movement, and vast in embrace, and an imagination peopling his soul with creations, grand and ennobling. His attainments were equally distinguished. He was abreast of his age in scientific knowledge and metaphysical philosophy. With classical authorities he was well acquainted, and the writings of the fathers seemed familiar to him. But the word of God was the home of his soul; he lived in it, knew its compartments and their furniture. His discourses we regard as the choicest treasures of the theological literature of England. We are thankful to receive this beautiful edition of his invaluable productions.



SCRIPTURE AND SCIENCE NOT AT VARIANCE. By JOHN H. PRATT, M.A.,  
Archdeacon of Calcutta. London: Hatchard & Co.

THIS is the fifth edition of a work which we noticed and characterized some years ago. Of the present edition the learned author says,—“There are considerable additions and improvements in this issue. The proof-sheets of the fourth edition had passed through my hands before ‘Essays and Reviews’ reached Calcutta. In an appendix to that edition, subsequently written, I made some remarks upon Mr. Goodwin’s allusions to this treatise; but the present is the first opportunity which I have had of fully entering upon the objections which he has revived in his essay on Mosaic Cosmogony. The pages which treat upon the interpretation of the opening verses of Genesis, are accordingly re-written with a view to meet the present aspect of the controversy. A further illustration of the harmony of Scripture and Science, where they were thought to be at variance, is drawn from considerations regarding the uniformity of the Laws of Nature and the suspension of their operation in miracles. Dr. Colenso’s attack upon the Pentateuch also furnishes me with a new example of harmony between Scripture and Science. Additions are made in the parts which treat on the Unity of the Human Race; on the Unity of Language; on the Age of the Human Race, supposed to be affected by ancient astronomical observations, the Chinese being now considered as well as the Hindoo of the same, as indicated by flint remains, and advocated in Sir Charles Lyell’s recent work on the ‘Antiquity of Man.’ The way in which natural phenomena are referred to in Scripture, is more particularly explained, and is illustrated by remarks on the meaning of ‘sunrise,’ and ‘sunset.’ The analogy between the experience of the past in the removal of apparent discrepancies between Scripture and Science, and the just expectations of the future, which is the great argument my book is intended to exhibit and enforce, is somewhat more fully opened out. The Appendix which was attached to my last edition, containing observations on the hieroglyphic system and other matters of interest, is now incorporated with the text. Some new Notes, and also an Index are added.” This is a most valuable little work. It is a hand-book charged with arguments and facts intended and sufficient to remove the objections which hostile criticism have brought against the Bible.

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MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF REV. THOMAS RAFFLES, D.D.,  
LL.D. By STAMFORD RAFFLES, ESQ., B.A. London: Jackson,  
Walford, & Hodder.

THE Independent denomination has, within the last few years, lost its greatest pulpit ornaments; men, the like of whom few, if any, remain. Hamilton, of Leeds; Jay, of Bath; James, of Birmingham; Raffles, of Liverpool, in the provinces. Harris, Leifchild, Sherman, Reed, and others, in the metropolis, some men of genius, all men of mark and might, are gone, and their

departure has wonderfully reduced the prestige of the denomination. In most cases, perhaps, more learned men have taken their place; but in few are there men of such royal natures and stately make. The open countenance, the emotional eye, the expansive brow, of Dr. Raffles, appeared before a congregation as a symbol of the grand message he was charged to deliver. About two years ago we preached with him at the ordination of a minister; it was the first time we had met him, and his cordial grasp, and loving greeting, won our hearts at once. We are glad to receive these memoirs of his life and history. His learned son has done his duty well as a biographer. His filial love has not led him to exaggerate excellencies or conceal defects. In truth, we rather wonder at the calmness. We should almost have expected pages written by a son of such a father would have been flooded with emotions. It is well, however, that it is otherwise. It is the just and discriminative estimate of character that makes the most salutary and lasting impression upon the mind of the reader. "It has been my aim throughout the book," says the author, "to leave the subject of the memoir to tell his own story, so far as was possible, in his own words." So that the lovers of Dr. Raffles can see him, and commune with him, in this very interesting volume.

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BRITISH NORTH AMERICA; with Maps. London: Religious Tract Society.

THE design of this volume seems to be, to give in a compendious form, trustworthy information respecting the history, condition, and prospects of British North America. The author, we are informed, has resided in more than one of the provinces which compose that vast territory, and has enjoyed special advantages for making himself acquainted with the circumstances of those that he had not visited. As British America is daily growing in value and importance to the mother-country, and thousands of our fellow-citizens are moving thitherward every year, such a work as this, presenting in a clear and condensed form its various aspects, cannot fail to be interesting and useful.

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AIREY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS; CARTWRIGHT ON THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS. Edinburgh: James Nicol. London: Nisbet & Co.

MR. NICOL, the enterprising publisher, of Edinburgh, has resolved upon reproducing certain important commentaries, as a supplemental series to standard divines of the Puritan period. The first is now before us, and a handsome volume it is. Crown quarto size, good paper, bold type, and well "got up." So far as we have been able to examine the work, we think it well worth disentanglement. It has thoughts that should be ungraved, uncoffined, unswathed, and set to work in the world's spiritual reformation. The memoir of each author is from the talented and well-known pen of Mr. Grosart.



# A HOMILY

ON

The Dreams of Joseph ;

OR

The Visions of Youth, the Jealousy of  
Society, and the Destiny of Virtue.

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“And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren : and they hated him yet the more. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed : for, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright ; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us ? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us ? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words. And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more ; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren : and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed ? shall I and thy mother and thy brethren come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth ? And his brethren envied him ; but his father observed the saying.”—Gen. xxxvii. 5—11.



WITH the history of Joseph, most in every congregation are supposed to be more or less familiar. It is written with such exquisite simplicity that a child can understand it ;

it is so brief that it can be read in an hour ; and its dramatic interest is so bewitching, that if commenced it must be read to the end, and if once read through will not be easily forgotten. *Destined superiority to brethren and parents* is the one grand idea that comes out in the strange visions of the night recorded in the text.

First: *This idea was evidently a Divine communication.* It was felt to be so both by the dreamer and his family to whom he told it, and its realization in his future history, places the question beyond the reach of any reasonable doubt. The Eternal Spirit came to him in the stillness of the night, and in the reveries of nocturnal thought, gave him a presage of the earthly dignity that awaited him.

Secondly: *This idea was expressed at different periods and in different symbols.* There were two dreams to convey the one same idea. Whether the two occurred in the same sleep, or on the same night, does not appear, but they were distinct from each other in their forms and in the consciousness of the dreamer. The *symbols*, too, were different. The scene of one was a harvest field, in which he and his family were binding sheaves of golden grain. The strange rising of his own sheaf, and the erect posture which it assumed, and the circling of their sheaves about it, and their obeisance to it symbolized the idea in the one dream. The scene of the other was the vaulted firmament, where the sun and moon and eleven stars appeared, and where these heavenly luminaries, by some peculiar motion, expressed their homage to him. This obeisance of the orbs of night and monarch of the day was another symbol of the same idea, namely, his destined superiority to his family. Thus God speaks once, yea twice, unto men, and in various forms, and in divers manners. Nature and the Bible abound with examples of the infinite variety of method by which the Eternal Father of Spirits conveys the same great ideas to His rational offspring.

Thirdly: *This idea was felt by all to have a Divine significance.* Not only did Joseph tell it in a way that expressed his strong belief in its Divine import, but his father and brethren no sooner heard it than they felt the same belief. Why else did the hearts of his brethren flame at once with fresh envy, and why else did his old father say, "Shall I and my mother and thy brethren *indeed* come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?"

I shall look at these dreams as serving to illustrate the

visions of youth, the jealousy of society, and the destiny of virtue.

I. THE VISIONS OF YOUTH. Whilst the dreams convey a *Divine* idea, there is, undoubtedly, much of the human in them. God speaks and works through the human. Joseph was young, and had, perhaps, in his constitution a strong dash of that hopefulness and ambition which are found more or less in connection with all young people. He wished, perhaps, to become great, and the wish to a great extent was the father of his dreams. Dreams are frequently the children of our desires. The young generally create bright visions of the future. In the harvest field of their coming life, their sheaf is the royal one; in the firmament of their future, the leading luminaries shall bow to them. If in trade, they will be the great merchants; if in professions, their career will be brilliant; in marriage-life, their partners are to be paragons of excellence, their children incarnations of beauty, their home an abode of plenty, love, and peace. A sky without a cloud, an atmosphere without storms, a land flowing with milk and honey, are the inheritance of their future. This tendency to brighten the future belongs to youth. You cannot eradicate it. Read to the young lessons drawn from the experience of six thousand years of human sorrow, trial, and disappointment, their future shall be still bright—their case will be an exception—it will not happen to them as it has happened to all. Preach to them that most of the men that have ever lived and suffered had in youth the same bright visions as they, but were disappointed, and that the same disappointments will inevitably meet them, all your sermons will not bring a cloud over the firmament of their future. A tendency so universal, so ineradicable, must be a Divine implantation, and intended by the Creator for beneficent ends.

I can discover at least three purposes which this tendency in youth serves to answer.

First: *It serves to increase the amount of man's happiness on this earth.* This tendency brings from the future a world of



pleasure to the young heart, not the less in consciousness because purely imaginary. Our highest joys are in the ideal realm, the realm of our own thoughts, and fancies, and creations. It is only when we are driven down from this realm by the stern realities, and pressing duties, and harassing cares of our material life, that we feel our life to be a scene of trial and vexation of soul. The young, while young, remain there and are happy. We all remember, even the oldest of us, something of the joys and raptures of that land of poetry and dreams. Now, were it not for this joyous experience of young life, the sum of our individual happiness here would be greatly diminished. The way for me to estimate God's conduct towards me, is to put the joys of my youthhood against the trials of my manhood and my age.

Secondly : *It serves to supply a mighty stimulus to our mental powers.* The young feel instinctively that the bright things they hope for are dependent upon their efforts. Whatever be the chief attraction in their future, whether the honors of scholarship, the luxuries of wealth, the dignities of office, or the *eclât* of fame, they feel they can only be grasped by effort. Hence their powers are called into vigorous action. If the future which our young life painted corresponded exactly with all that our life turned out to be, I scarcely think we should struggle to reach it, and our powers, in whose full development our well-being consists, would remain in utter dormancy. The Jew in Egypt had nothing but Canaan held up to his imagination to stimulate his efforts for emancipation. Had the trials in the wilderness been held before him, he would have stuck to the flesh-pots in the land of his tyrants. Let the young have their lives revealed to them as they will actually be, and let them believe in that revelation, and where their powers would not be paralyzed by a view of the trials that awaited them, there would certainly be a loss of all impulse for activity. God seems to educate men by illusions. As of old, He held out to the patriarchs and to the prophets, promises which they struggled after, but died without receiving; so in all young life, He

permits bright things to loom in their imagination which they wrestle for but never reach, and in the wrestle is their use and their reward.

Thirdly : *It serves to intimate what human nature would have been had there been no sin.* Faith in a bright future is an instinct of the soul. As the eye implies light, this instinct implies future good, for would the All-good Creator have implanted in us faith in a good which had no existence. Our faith continues, but through sin we have lost the way to reach the object. I am disposed to believe that had not sin come into the world, there would have come to us all in this life far brighter and more joyous things than ever entered the most hopeful imagination of youth. How great the difference between the hopes of our youth and the realities of our life. Between the ideal and the actual in our experience, there is a yawning chasm dividing an Eden from a vale of tears. Sin dug out that awful chasm.

Such are some of the purposes which this tendency in youth to create bright visions of the future serves to answer, and who will not say that its uses justify its existence and its operations. I thank God that whilst I see age around me faithless and desponding in relation to the future, that young life is still full of faith and hope. What more refreshing to advanced manhood and infirm age than the beaming looks and bright dreams and poetic utterances of those who are living in youth's romantic world!

II. THE JEALOUSIES OF SOCIETY. "And his brethren said to him, shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words." It was the hatred of jealousy that these brethren evidently experienced. Jealousy is a passion that springs from the fear of a rival enjoying advantages which we desire for ourselves. Though nearly akin to envy, there is some difference between them. Jealousy is a fear that the rival will get the advantage we desire. Envy is a hatred because the advantage has been obtained. Jealousy burns towards the rival because he is

in the way to get the superiority. Envy burns towards him because he has won it.

I may make three remarks about this jealousy.

First : *It is very general.* We look at it burning in the heart of these brethren towards their brother, and we feel it to be an accursed thing ; but it is a prevalent passion in all circles of life. Let a man of your own class and from your own sphere of acquaintance be on the way of winning a position that you desire, and in you, if you are not a man of Christian nobility, this feeling will rise with more or less strength. Generally, the nearer the rival is connected with us, and the more intensely we desire the good he is about obtaining, will be the strength of the passion. As a rule, men are pained rather than pleased with the advancement of the men of their sphere and of their class ; they are more pleased in seeing them sinking a little lower than rising a little higher than themselves. Hence, we find it far more easy for men to weep with those that weep, than to rejoice with those that rejoice. It is less difficult to extract from some of the hardest natures a tear of sympathy for those of their own acquaintance and grade whom misfortune has overtaken, than it is to awaken even in the kindest hearts a genuine joy for those who have risen above them. Let your own brother reach a good which you are aspiring after, and would you heartily sympathize with the joy that floods his nature on account of his success ? The sinking man you may pity ; to the man who continues on your level you may give your friendship ; but the man who by his greater industry or superior genius climbs from your side the ladder of eminence, wakes within you that jealousy which is likely to turn all love into hate.

I observe that this feeling—

Secondly : *Is an unhappy feeling.* Of all the furies in the world of demon passions, jealousy is one of the most tormenting. It is

“ Incessant gall,  
Corroding every thought, and blasting all  
Love's paradise.”

Poetry has well-nigh exhausted the vocabulary of what is terrible in describing it. It is "the almighty tyrant of the human mind," the "merciless destroyer, more cruel than the grave," "the conflagration of the soul," "the king of torments," "the grand counterpoise for all the transports beauty can inspire," "the green-eyed monster," "a passion fiercer than famine, war, or spotted pestilence—baneful as death, and horrible as hell." Even pious Hannah More seems to have felt it, and passionately exclaims,

"Oh, jealousy, thou ugliest fiend of hell !  
 Thy deadly venom preys on my vitals,  
 Turns the healthful hue of my fresh cheek to haggard sallowness,  
 And drinks my spirit up."

It was this that made Haman miserable, though he occupied a seat above all the princes that were with him. "All this," said he, "availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the King's gate."

It is recorded in Grecian story that Theagenes, a citizen of Thasos, and a celebrated victor in the public games of Greece, had a famous statue raised to him by his countrymen, and that one of his rivals, inspired by this demon passion, went forth in the silence and darkness of night and endeavoured to throw it down by repeated blows. At last he succeeded, and before he could escape it fell from its pedestal and crushed him to death. This fact not only shows the restless torment of this passion, but symbolizes the doom of its possessor. He who seeks to destroy the glory of a rival crushes his own soul in the attempt.

I observe that this feeling—

Thirdly: *Is unchristian.* What has already been advanced is sufficient to show us that it is unchristian. Christianity is that spirit of benevolence that leads us to promote the good of others, and to rejoice in their success. Jealousy is the opposite to this. Solomon says, "it is the rage of a man, therefore will he not spare in the day of his vengeance?" Christianity says, "be kind to one another ;

tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake forgave us."

So much then for the subject of jealousy, as suggested by our text. Does not this *general, unhappy, and unchristian* feeling indicate how far our souls have fallen from the standard and the spirit of goodness? Does it not show that there is no well-founded hope for the world's happiness without a thorough renovation of soul, that "unless man is born again he cannot enter into the kingdom" of true enjoyment?

III. THE DESTINY OF VIRTUE. Joseph's dreams were no delusion. The superiority they symbolized he reached; he became greater than his brothers, greater than his parents; he was set over all the land of Egypt; he received the obeisance of his family. When the famine raged throughout those regions, and Joseph had command of all the provisions of Egypt, we are told that Joseph's brethren came and "bowed down themselves before him to the earth." (Genesis lxii. 6.) Here is the dream fulfilled. The question which they put to him from jealousy when he narrated to them his dreams, "Shalt thou indeed reign over us, or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?" is here answered. Here they lay prostrate at his feet. Aye, the greatest luminaries of his age made their obeisance to him! The secular distinction that he reached was but the effect and expression of that moral distinction which he attained; he had won a sovereignty over his own passions, and obtained the favor of heaven. Why was he enabled to reach this distinction? Why was he enabled to realize the bright prospects of his youthful dreams? I answer, because of his *virtue*, for although he had many silent defects of character, he was virtuous in the main. *Glory is ever the destiny of virtue.*

First: *There is much in a virtuous life itself to ensure advancement.* The man whose soul is inspired with true sentiments, and is guided in everything by the principles of godliness, pursues a course that must lead to distinction. He has within



him the guarantees for *secular* advancement. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Intemperance, extravagance, improvidence and indolence, the fruitful sources of poverty, are expelled from the heart of a godly man, and principles of an opposite character, and working in an opposite direction, have taken their place and are regal within him. "Riches and honor are with me," says virtue. He has within him a guarantee for *intellectual* advancement. There is nothing like religion to remove the inertia of intellect, to sweep the soul's horizon of all the mists that obscure the vision, to lay open the fields of truth in all that variety of charm that shall rouse the mind into the activity of research and exploration. It is a guarantee for advancement in *social influence*. The more goodness a man has within him, the more real power he has over the souls of others. From the constitution of the human mind, the most wicked are compelled to feel an inward reverence for moral goodness wherever it is displayed. In the great harvest field of social life, the sheaves of wickedness gather round that of virtue and render obeisance. Thus virtue has in itself a guarantee. "The path of the just is as a shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Secondly : *Advancement is pledged by God himself to a virtuous life*. "Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give the desire of thine heart." And again, "The Lord God is a sun and shield, the Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." And again, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." And again, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father." Their destined position in the universe is that of kings and priests unto God. "They shall sit down on the throne of Christ, and shall receive a crown of glory that shall never fade away."

Learn, in conclusion, my young friends, from this subject the *fate of eminence*. If you are struggling

to excel in any department of life, in proportion to your success anticipate the fate which Joseph met with from his brethren. Society is morally low, and it has ever felt a jealousy towards those of its children who work their way above its level. Heed not this jealousy, but march onward. Heed it not, though it hiss at you with the venom of a serpent, or speak about you with the tongue of slander and detraction. Heed it not, it is the penalty that greatness has ever had to pay in our world. It was directed by the rulers of the nation against even Christ Himself. Heed it not; it is a thousand times better to be the object of those vile passions, than to feel them rankling in your heart. Heed it not, for Christ has given His disciples reason to expect it. "The servant is not greater than his Lord, if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you."

Learn also, my young friends, from this subject *the path of glory*. Would you have more than the brightest dreams of your youth realized in the future. "Then get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding. Exalt her and she shall bring thee to honour." It is not by talent, however great; not by genius, however brilliant; not by industry, however untiring, that a glorious future will be reached. There is but one path to a bright future. The path of virtue is the path of glory. Enter this path now. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." The beginning may be difficult, but the end will be everlasting life. A few years, should you be spared, and you will have to leave that romantic world of youth in which you are now living. From the flowery lawns, ambrosial bowers, balmy airs, and elysian scenes of poetry, you must step into the rough and dusty road of the world's stern realities. You will have to breathe the bleak winds of a selfish age, be beaten by those storms of disappointment and trial that will wreck your favorite projects, and work under a sky dark and cold with mercenary influences. Before that period comes—before the day of youthhood is over, "enter in at the strait gate."

Enter now, before prejudice shall warp your judgment, and

habit fetter your will, and sin steel your conscience and pollute the fountain of your being. Enter now, before secular concerns engross your energies and absorb your time. Enter now, whilst those mystic nerves of your nature which connect you with God and His moral system are so exquisitely tender that they thrill to the Divine voices of duty and of love. Enter now; you have not a moment you can call your own. Death is approaching, and the Judge standeth at the door; and the dawn of eternity is about breaking on your being.

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## A Homiletic Glance at the Acts of the Apostles.

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Able expositions of the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, describing the manners, customs, and localities described by the inspired writers; also interpreting their words, and harmonizing their formal discrepancies, are, happily, not wanting amongst us. But the eduction of its widest truths and highest suggestions is still a felt desideratum. To some attempt at the work we devote these pages. We gratefully avail ourselves of all exegetical helps within our reach; but to occupy our limited space with any lengthened archæological, geographical, or philological remarks, would be to miss our aim; which is not to make bare the mechanical process of the study of Scripture, but to reveal its spiritual results.

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### SECTION SIXTEENTH.—Acts vi. 1—7.

“And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: whom they set before the apostles: and when

they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."—Acts vi. 1—7.

SUBJECT :—*The First Election of Deacons.*

**A** TERRIBLE evil is referred to in the first verse, in most respects a worse evil than had hitherto happened to the first church, namely, DISSENSION WITHIN. Hitherto, there had been furious storms without, but the utmost concord within. They "were of one heart and of one soul." The parties now contending were Grecians and Hebrews. The *Grecians* were Hellenists, not Greeks, but Jews using the Greek language in their worship, Greek-speaking Jews who had been converted to Christianity and joined the new church. The *Hebrews* were natives of Palestine, and others who used the Hebrew Scriptures, genuine Jews in all respects. The *subject* of contention, was the neglect of widows "in the daily ministration." It was said by some that there was something like favoritism in the distribution of the charities of the church, that the widows of the Hellenist Christians were neglected. Whether this was a fact or not there must have been a great danger of it in that new communion. The native Jews or the Hebrews would, of course, be far the most numerous, and the ties of country and language would give them a special interest in each other, and this might have led to a partiality in the distribution of the church's temporal favors. The expression of discontent was a "murmuring," a suppressed grumble. This is a form which social discontent frequently takes, and it is for many reasons the most vile and pernicious. The church-member who speaks out his discontent audibly, fully, frankly, is a noble character compared with him who goes about murmuring, groaning, whispering out his miserable spirit. *This first dissension within the church* was the immediate occasion for the election of a new class of officers called "deacons." This passage gives us an account of their election, and leads us to consider

*the reason of their election, the method of their election, the qualification for their election, and the usefulness of their election.*

I. THE REASON OF THEIR ELECTION. Two things make plain the reason why this office was now called into existence, and they are here referred to.

First : *The temporal necessities of the poor members of the church.* There were many poor in that new and large community ; many who were dependent, perhaps almost entirely, for their support on the public funds. "*Widows*" are especially mentioned here, and they, as a rule, in all communities are the most abject and the most deserving aid ; and the Bible especially commends them to the compassion of the benevolent. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." It is the duty of the church to attend to the temporal as well as the spiritual necessities of its members. In this, Christ left us an example ; and we are commanded to "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

Secondly : *The absorbing work of the Gospel ministry.* This the "twelve apostles" referred to as a reason. "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables." "Serve tables," means attending on tables, and figuratively expresses the temporal administration that was necessary ; and it may include not only the distribution of the funds of the church among its poorer members, but the entire management of all its temporalities. Up to this time it seems that the apostles had attended to this—they had looked to the poor, they had attended to the widows. But their spiritual work now was becoming too absorbing, and they felt that it was neither right nor proper that they should in any way neglect the spiritual for the temporal. Hence the election of deacons. They were elected, not to *rule*, as some arrogant modern deacons fancy. Their work was a subordinate one, merely to take care of the finances, as the



almoners of the public bounty. Nor were they elected to *preach and publicly pray* as some modern deacons also think. All who were qualified to preach, should preach, and all should pray ; but these are no more the offices of deacons than of any private member.

II. THE METHOD OF THEIR ELECTION. In their election the church and the apostles had their different parts to fulfil.

First : *The church had its part.* The multitude of the disciples were called together. The aggregate body assembled in order to act in their corporate capacity. They had first to look out for seven men, the most suitable for the work amongst them. They were to make inquiries, and use their best judgment in discovering the most eligible persons. Having discovered them, they were then to choose them. Each one was to exercise his best judgment, and conscientiously give his vote.

Secondly : *The apostles had their part.* What did the apostles do in the matter ? (1) They *originated* the election. The suggestion for new officers came from them, not from the members ; and they, not the members, called the church together for the purpose. (2) They *directed* the election. Though they did not, perhaps, formally nominate the men for the office, they did that which was more important and equally influential, *described the character of the men*, held up to the multitude their moral portraits, and said, "We want men like this picture." "Seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." (3) They *confirmed* the election. The men the Church elected, Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, &c., they "set before the apostles." What for ? That the apostles might ordain them. Had they not been up to the apostles' idea, answered to the qualifications they had laid down, would they have ordained them ? I trow not. They undoubtedly had the veto—the power of accepting or rejecting the choice of the church. The apostles in this case, however, accepted that choice. "And when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them." Amongst the Jews

it was customary to lay hands on the heads of any persons who were set apart for any particular office. (Gen. xlviii. 14, 18 ; Num. xxvii. 18 ; Acts viii. 17, &c.)

II. THE QUALIFICATION FOR THEIR ELECTION. There are three qualifications stated here. First : *Unblemished reputation*. "Men of honest report," that is, men universally regarded as men of integrity, whose characters were above suspicion, whose reputation stood before the world without a stain.

Secondly : *Eminently godly*. "Full of the Holy Ghost." Full of the thoughts and purposes of the Gospel : under the domination of Christianity.

Thirdly : *Practical sagacity*. "Wisdom." They were to be men who had an aptitude for the work ; who could distinguish between the merits of cases ; administer the charities with judgment and equity. Paul more fully describes these qualifications. (1 Tim. iii.)

IV. THE RESULT OF THEIR ELECTION. "And the word of God increased ; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly ; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." "It seems," says Dr. Alexander, "to be implied, though not explicitly affirmed, that this effect was promoted by the measure just before described—the ordination of the seven almoners or deacons." It may have operated thus in several ways.

First : *By quelling the spirit of contention*. This spirit would, of course, act as an obstruction to the advancement of the church.

Secondly : *By the augmented agency of the church*. Seven noble men set to work.

Thirdly : *By enabling the apostles to give themselves entirely to preaching the Gospel*. In this way the election contributed to the extension of the church.

It is said that "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." This is stated as something remarkable.

# Gems of Thought.

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SUBJECT:—*Philip and the Eunuch : a Remarkable Meeting.*

“And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: in his humiliation his judgement was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea.”—Acts viii. 26—40.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Seventy-third.

**T**HIS fragment of Divine history informs us of a *meeting* very noteworthy on many accounts. It was—

I. A MEETING OF TWO VERY REMARKABLE MEN,—Philip and the eunuch. Each of these men stood out amongst his contemporaries as a marked man. They were not of the

millions that are lost in the crowd and that flow with the stream. One was distinguished by his high political position, the other by his adherence to a new faith, and his advocacy of doctrines that clashed with the general opinions of his age. Philip was one of the first seven deacons, (Acts vi. 5) whose office it was to serve tables; he combined with the office of a deacon that of an evangelist, (Acts xxi. 8) whose office it was to preach the gospel from place to place. (Eph. iv. 11; 2 Tim. iv. 5.) The persecution that broke out at Jerusalem and which led to the martyrdom of Stephen, caused him to flee to Samaria for refuge. Here, in a city where Simon Magus resided, he preached "things concerning the kingdom of God," and here also he performed great miracles, which prepared the minds of the people for the reception of the gospel. (Acts viii. 6.) As soon as Peter and John had come to Samaria to carry on and complete the work which Philip commenced there, our evangelist, we are informed, was directed by a Divine impulse to proceed towards Gaza, where he met with the eunuch, and where the incidents recorded in this paragraph occurred. We read of him in subsequent parts of this book; his history may thus be summed up: he was a practical believer in Christ, he was honored by the church in being elected as one of the seven deacons; he was called by the Spirit to be an evangelist to go from place to place preaching the Gospel, and he was endowed with the power of working miracles. The eunuch, we are told, was a man of great authority, under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. There are two countries called Ethiopia, one in Asia and one in Africa. This was the one in Africa, lying south of Egypt. *Candace* was not a personal but an official name, the title of the female sovereign of Ethiopia, as *Cæsar* was the name of the emperor of Rome, and *Pharaoh* of Egypt. This eunuch, it would seem, had immense influence over her, was royal chamberlain of her household, intrusted with all her treasures, and, perhaps, her secrets too. He was the greatest man in the kingdom. The fact that he had been to Jerusalem to worship, and was found reading in his chariot the Hebrew

Scriptures, shows that he was a Jew, either by birth or by proselytism, probably the latter. The Jews, from all parts of the world, were in ancient times accustomed to attend the religious feasts at Jerusalem. This eunuch had been at one of those feasts and was returning. These were the two men that now met; confessedly, no ordinary men. In appearance and in worldly possession they greatly differed. Philip was poor, without wealth, social status or political power, under a hot sun prosecuting his journey on the dusty roads on foot. The great Divine ideas with which his soul was charged, helped no doubt to bear him on and make his journey light. The eunuch was an affluent man, high in office and great in his country's esteem; he was wending his way homeward, not on foot, but in a chariot, provided with all that the civilisation of his age could supply to make his journey pleasant. These were the men that met. It was—

II. A MEETING BROUGHT ABOUT BY EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES. The circumstances that brought these two remarkable men together, not merely in body but in soul, are so extraordinary as to give something of a romantic character to the event. It was—

First: *The direction of Philip to Gaza.* What induced Philip to go to Gaza, one of the five old Philistine cities, whose gates the famous Samson once bore away and which was now "desert?" The twenty-sixth verse answers the question. "And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert." He did not decide on the journey by his own reasoning, nor by the advice of a fellow man, but a messenger from heaven came to him, "an angel of the Lord." Who, or what the messenger was, a celestial intelligence or an inward suggestion by the Divine Spirit, is an open question. One thing is clear, that the direction came from God, and Philip felt it to be so, and hence at once obeyed the mandate. He was not disobedient to the heavenly voice. He was directed this way most



probably for the very purpose of meeting this lord chamberlain, to instruct him in the gospel, in order that he might become an influential preacher to the sable sons of Ethiopia.

Another extraordinary circumstance which brought about this meeting was—

Secondly: *The occupation of the eunuch in his chariot.* "He was reading Esaias the prophet." Most likely the version of Scriptures he was reading from was the Greek or Septuagint, a translation of the Scriptures which was made in Egypt for the special use of the Jews in Alexandria and throughout Egypt, and which was in general circulation. Why was he reading it? Was it to relieve the tedium of the journey? If so, he could not have done anything better. The Bible, as a literary production, has charms to interest that transcend all the highest efforts of human genius. Travellers on long journeys would find it far more interesting, to say nothing else, than the trash they purchase on railway stalls. Or was it for the purpose of intellectual culture? Did he wish to give vigor to his intellect, and buoyancy to his imagination? He could not do better than to read the Scriptures. No book on earth furnishes such helps to mind as the Bible. Or was it to store his mind with the knowledge of the true principles of social order and political government? If so, he adopted the wisest course. Or was it in obedience to the Jewish Rabbis, who directed that "when any one was going on a journey and had not a companion, he should study the law?" Or was it because he had just heard in Jerusalem so much about the crucifixion and the resurrection of Christ, and also the wonders of the Pentecost, that he was determined to search the Scriptures in order to see whether He was the true Messiah or not? Whatever might have been his particular reasons I know not. It is with the fact we have to do; inasmuch as it was that which brought him into contact with Philip. The narrative gives the impression that had not Philip seen this eunuch with the Scriptures in his hand and heard him read, he might have passed him by and there would have been no meeting. The

Bible was the magnet that drew the heart of the evangelist to the chamberlain.

The other extraordinary circumstance which brought about this meeting was—

Thirdly : *The strange impulse that prompted Philip to join the chariot.* “Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.” The impulse to join the eunuch in his chariot is here ascribed to the Spirit, that is the Spirit of God. The reading of the Bible perhaps first attracted Philip’s attention, and the Spirit started the impulse to join him. In truth, without a Divine impulse, it is scarcely likely that a poor pedestrain like Philip would have ventured to have rushed to this nobleman, and have asked the question, “understandest thou what thou readest?” There is something more than human in this boldness.

Such are the circumstances that brought about this meeting. They are not fortuitous occurrences or accidental coincidences. There is a divinity in them, a divinity originating and directing them. God is in all history originating the good and controlling the bad. It was—

III. A MEETING TURNED TO RARE SPIRITUAL ACCOUNT. Coming together what did they do? Discuss politics or converse on the common-place topics of the day? No! They commence an earnest talk about God’s Scriptures. Philip said, “Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.” Two things now took place.

First : *The eunuch was enlightened by Philip.* Two things are necessary in order for one man spiritually to enlighten another. (1) There must be on the part of one a disposition to receive knowledge. This the eunuch now possessed. He said, “How can I, except some man should guide me. And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.” He felt his ignorance, and confessed it. In his swarthy bosom there was a strong desire for more light, hence he

seized this opportunity. Had he not had this disposition, Philip's expositions, if listened to, would have been of no service whatever. A consciousness of ignorance is the alphabet of knowledge. (2) There must be on the part of the other a power to impart knowledge. Philip had this. He knew Christ; and knowing Christ, he could explain the passage which the eunuch seems to have been reading, but which he could not understand. The passage was as follows:—"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter," &c. It is quoted, not from the Hebrew, but from the Septuagint version. The question which the eunuch raised on the passage, was not whether it was the word of God or not, but to whom did the words refer. "I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?" Just the question this, on which Philip was at home, and to which he was prepared at once to give a full answer. He "opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." He shewed, perhaps, how exactly the history of Jesus answered to the prophet's description, and how He was indeed the Messiah of the Old Testament. The biography of Jesus is the key to interpret the writings of the prophets. *He "preached unto him Jesus."* He did not preach a *creed*, but *Christ* as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. His sermon is not reported. We have nothing more than his text, and his grand theme—Jesus. This seems to have solved the moral questions of the eunuch, to have satisfied the cravings of his nature, and to have effected the salvation of his soul; for "he went on his way rejoicing."

Secondly: *The eunuch was baptized by Philip.* "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" There is nothing in these verses (36—39) to show certain things about baptism that are held with earnestness by a certain body of Christians. The passage does not teach—(1) That baptism is an obligation. There is no proof that Philip enjoined baptism on the eunuch, or that he said a word about it; indeed it seems that the sudden sight

of water suggested the thought to the eunuch's mind. Being a proselyte to the Jewish faith, and having been baptized when he joined that religion, he perhaps thought that now he was joining a new religion he should be baptized again. We do not say—for we believe otherwise—that baptism is not a duty for some; all we say, that these verses do not teach it. The verses do not teach—(2) That baptism is to be performed by immersion. We do not say that immersion is not the right way; we say there is nothing in this passage to teach it. (1) The reference to the water does not teach it. "Certain water." Hundreds of travellers have visited this spot in order to see whether there was sufficient water for immersion, and not one has discovered such. (2) The words employed do not teach it. "And they went down both into the water. . . . And when they were come up out of the water." The preposition *εις*, here translated *into*, is translated in other parts of the Bible no less than 538 times by *to* and *into*; and the preposition *εκ*, *out of*, is translated *from* nearly 200 times in other places. So all that the words mean is, that they went to the water and came from it; and they apply to Philip as well as the eunuch. If they mean dipping to the eunuch, they mean dipping to Philip; but they mean no such thing. The words do not teach—(3) That baptism is only for believers. It is very true here that Philip is reported to have said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest," and the eunuch to have replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God;" but this passage is an interpolation—it is not in the original Scriptures. Dean Alford, in his Greek Testament, says on this interpolation, that "the insertion appears to have been made to *suit the formularies of the baptismal liturgies*, it being considered strange that the eunuch should have been baptized without some such confession." And Webster and Wilkinson, no mean authorities, remark that "this verse is wanting in the best manuscripts, and is generally regarded as an interpolation.\* Its insertion in the text, marks the

\* It is omitted by Lachmann and Tischendorf: it is wanting in the Codex Sinaiticus.

progress made in the importance attached to forms of profession in the administration of the sacraments."

So much for the baptismal reference of the passage, which leaves the question of baptism, as to its mode and subject, open to be settled, if settled at all, by other passages. It was—

IV. A MEETING WHOSE TERMINATION WAS SUBLIMELY HAPPY. All meetings on earth have their termination, some end in sorrow.

First: *It was happy to Philip.* "The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more." The Spirit that had suggested to Philip to meet the eunuch and to speak to him, now suggested his departure. "He was *caught away.*" There is no need of supposing, as some have entertained, that he was borne away in the air by miraculous agency, all that is meant is, that he was strongly impelled by the Spirit. Such powerful impulses were awakened within him that he could not but go. Such impulses he required no doubt to effect his separation, for his connection with the eunuch had become close and strong. He was directed to Azotus, the Greek name for the city of Ashdod, about thirty miles from Gaza; and thence he proceeded and preached in all the cities until he came to Cæsarea. He had fulfilled his mission with the eunuch, and he proceeded by Divine impulse to work out the Divine will in relation to others. Thus moving away by the influence of God from the eunuch, Philip must have felt sublimely happy.

Secondly: *It was happy to the eunuch.* "He went on his way rejoicing." And well he might rejoice. The Bible had become a new book to him. A Divine light had fallen on its pages, that gave it a meaning he never understood before, a charm he never felt before. He had found Him, Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write. *Rejoicing*, for he was full of love to that Jesus whom Philip preached to him; *rejoicing*, for he felt that he had a wonderful blessing to impart to his sable countrymen.

Thus they parted, the one to go home in stately pomp to



be welcomed by his countrymen with marks of honor and distinction, the other to go as a poor evangelist into strange regions to deliver a message, which would rouse against him obliquy and ire. Thus they parted, never again perhaps to meet on this earth, but both anticipating a joyous meeting in the holy heavens above.

In conclusion, the subject suggests a lesson to those of you who have not yet experimentally understood the meaning of God's Holy Scriptures. Study them, as did the eunuch, with an earnest heart and an enquiring mind; if you do so, God will send some Philip to you, who shall give you that for which your natures crave. It suggests a lesson to those who experimentally know Jesus. Go and preach Christ to men as Philip did.

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SUBJECT :—*Christ and the Woman of Samaria.*

"And he must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away into the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he

whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he."—John iv. 4—26.

Analysis of *Homily the Six Hundred and Seventy-fourth.*

**I** HAVE discoursed on certain parts of this wonderful narrative before,\* but I take the whole now for a most important practical purpose. It may be well, however, before going to the direct object I have in view, to say a word concerning the *place* and *time* of this most remarkable meeting between Christ and the woman of Samaria. The place is fully described in the 5th verse. "Then cometh he to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar." In the Old Testament this Sychar was called Shechem. (Gen. xii. 6.) It lies about thirty-four miles north of Jerusalem, and about fifteen miles south of the city of Samaria, in the narrow gorge between mount Gebal and Gerizim. As you enter the gorge from the south, you come upon Jacob's well. A church was once erected to mark this sacred spot, and the granite ruins lie there still. Samaritans, Jews, Christians, and Mahometans, all agree that this is the site of Jacob's well and Joseph's tomb. In Gen. xxxiii. 19, there is an account of Jacob's purchase of a field near Shechem; and in Josh. xxiv. 32, we find that Joseph was actually buried in that field. Here, on this ancient spot, hallowed in the associations of every descendant of the old patriarchs, Jesus now met this woman of Samaria

\* See "Homilist," New Series, Vol. III., p. 365. New Series, Vol. IV., p. 325.

on his way to Galilee. As to the *time*, we are told it was the sixth hour—that is, about twelve o'clock at noon—the hour when the sun was at its height, and when water, therefore, would be doubly precious to the traveller on his road; and we read, that “Jesus being wearied with his journey, sat on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.”

Now, our present purpose, in connection with this narrative, is to point out the way in which the Heavenly Teacher takes hold upon the dark and the depraved mind of the poor woman in order to raise her to intelligence, to worship, and to eternal life. How to get at the masses, how to get the lower classes—as they are called—interested in spiritual and eternal realities, is the question that agitates most churches in the present day, and presses especially upon the heart of every earnest minister of Jesus Christ. The toiling millions of this country are confessedly outside of all churches, and for the most part out of sympathy with those things which are essential to spiritual culture and everlasting peace. Scheme after scheme is propounded in order to reach them, and bring these wandering sheep into the fold. Theatres are open for religious services, tales are introduced into religious journals in order to make—as is unwisely hoped—spiritual truth more palatable, ministers deliver secular lectures to the working classes, and exhaust their wit and their humor to make them interesting and attractive. In some cases, amongst the smaller-brained and the more mawkish-hearted of the religious world, efforts are adopted so ineffably silly as only to awaken the disgust of the more thoughtful of the working classes. Even the pulpit itself, in some cases, has been employed as the organ of miserable clap-trap, coarse humor, and silly jests. A work entitled “Punch and the Pulpit” has actually been written, exposing the abominations of such iniquity.

Now, all these efforts employed more or less by good men, from the wiser to the most foolish of them, show how deeply the necessity and importance of winning over the millions to religion is felt, and how unsettled the best are as to the most effective scheme. In this respect, as in all departments of

holy labor, I take Christ to be our example. If an effective plan is to be obtained at all, it must be got from His life, for He came to seek and to save the lost. *In His conduct to the woman of Samaria now at Jacob's well, we may learn the true method of reclaiming the degraded poor.* Let us, then, carefully examine His conduct. How did He act towards her?

I. HE APPROACHED HER ON THE BROAD GROUND OF HUMANITY. He did not approach her as *poor*, by referring to her social condition and class, nor as a *Samaritan*, by referring to her religious prejudices and sect, but He approaches her as a *woman*, one inheriting human nature with all its wondrous potentialities, solemn relations, and deep spiritual wants.

First : *He asks a favor of her, and thus assures her that He does not despise her on the ground of her poverty.* "Jesus saith unto her, give me to drink." It has been said that "few things so touch the degraded and despised as asking a favor at their hands." If a man in the most elevated station of life would touch my heart, and win my sympathies, he would do it more effectively by condescending to ask me a service, than in generously bestowing one. His gift to me would leave me feeling the distance still between us ; but my gift to him, if he entered my humble cottage and sought it at my hands, would make me feel that he stood with me on the common level of our nature. You honor a man a great deal more by receiving his favors than in conferring upon him your own. You feel often humbled in the reception of a gift, but always exalted in the bestowment of one. Enter a poor man's cottage, sit at his board, and take from him the humblest of his fare, and he will feel that you have done more to honor his nature than if you had conferred upon him a costly donation. Christ knew human nature ; and hence to make this woman feel at once on a level with Him, He asks her the favor of a little water. Man, however poor, has self-respect, and has an ineradicable desire to be honored by his compeers ; and from those whom he thinks

despise him, he shrinks with loathing and disgust. The church now practically despises poverty, and hence the gulf between it and the millions. The church forms her institution so as to become independent of the poor; their voluntary offerings are not sought, as if their mite was not worth having. Sermons are constructed for the poor, as if they had not sufficient common sense to understand the average productions of the pulpit of this age. Religious services are got up for the poor, as if they were unworthy to mingle with others in their devotions. These efforts, assuredly, have in themselves no strong tendency—to say the least—of removing from the heart of the poor the feeling that they are despised. Let us learn to open the heart of the poor as Christ opened it, by endeavoring to get some service which they can render, if not of money, of mind.

Secondly: *He asks a favor of her, though a Samaritan, and thus assures her that He does not despise her on the ground of her sect.* Between the Jews and Samaritans there had been for ages a deep mutual hostility on account of their religion. The ill-feeling sprung up among them at the building of Zerubbabel's temple. So wide-spread and influential was the enmity, that the Jews were not allowed to have any dealings with the Samaritans. Christ, as man, by birth was a Jew, and the woman recognized the fact. There was something perhaps in His costume, features, or aspect that assured her he was a Jew, and hence her astonishment that he should ask of her a favor. "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." As if she had said, the Jew has always despised us, regarded us with contempt and indignation, and yet thou askest a favor of me. She must have felt that the Jew before her did not despise her on account of her religion, and this must have disposed her heart to have listened to what He said. Christ, though a Jew by birth, was not a Jew in soul. None of the narrow prejudice of the Jew, and sectarian feelings of the Jew, were found in His heart. He was the true "Son of Man," and rose



superior to all the distinctions of race, country, or sect. He did not shun the woman because of her religious peculiarities, nor did He condescend to notice them. His aim was to give her the true thought, spirit, and life. Herein we should imitate Him, if we would raise the degraded. We should not go to the poor as Catholics, Churchmen, or Dissenters, but as ministers of Christ, knowing nothing among men save, "Jesus Christ and him crucified." The feeling of the old Jew, in relation to the Samaritans, has ever been too prevalent in the church. The Catholics despise the Protestants, and the Protestants, the Catholics; Churchmen, Nonconformists; and Nonconformists, Churchmen. The men who differ from us in opinion, it is even fashionable for the pulpit to insult and denounce. This is not the way to win souls, it is not the way that Christ acted.

Another thing observable and demanding our attention in His method is—

II. HE PROPOUNDED TO HER SALVATION IN A WAY WHICH MADE HER FEEL ITS NECESSITY. "Jesus answered and said unto her, if thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." He propounded the blessing *immediately*. No preliminary remarks, no reference to any other subject; an opportunity occurred for introducing the subject of salvation, and He did it *at once*. That, of all wants, was the greatest want of that poor woman; that of all subjects was the most dominant and absorbing subject in His mind, and that at once He urges on her attention. He did it *intelligibly* by employing imagery, with which she was perfectly familiar. The "well" was before her, and for that refreshing element she came. He speaks of salvation as water of a higher nature. She knew that water was a life-giving, thirst-satisfying, nature-cleansing power, the most valuable thing in the material world, and He gives her to understand that there was something better than that, a water that is the especial gift of God, which would quench the thirst of her soul,

and be in her as a fountain of blessedness, springing up unto everlasting life. He propounded it *suggestively*. The way in which He spoke of it filled her with new interest, and set her mind to work. She asks for information, "Whence hast thou that living water?" How did it come to thee? And who art thou? "Art thou greater than our father Jacob which gave us the well?" Thus He touched within her the springs of intellect, and set her thinking upon subjects which had never, perhaps, occupied her attention before. The religious teacher has done nothing with his hearers, unless he breaks the monotony of thought, and sets the mind on enquiry concerning duty and destiny. He propounded it *impressively*. In answer to her questions He utters these impressive words, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." How sublime His language! It transcends all human conceptions; it is full of Divinity. To us, as we read the words, they have a grand impressiveness, but as they came from the lips of Christ fresh on the ear of the woman, with His eye fixed on her, how deeply she must have felt them. It turned her questions into prayer, "Give me this water." This is effective teaching. Our object with sinners should be so to present the truth, both in our private conversations and in public discourses, that the hearer should exclaim, "Give me this water." Unless this is the result of our sermons, we do but little good, our preaching is vain. Our object should be to make men feel that the Gospel is as great a necessity to the human soul, as water is to the body. This Christ did.

Another thing observable and demanding our attention is—

III. HE SO TOUCHED ON HER HISTORY THAT SHE FELT THE DIVINITY OF HIS MISSION. "Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband:

in that saidst thou truly." Thus He touched her conscience, called up to her the memory of her sins, and prepared her by contrition to receive the water of everlasting life. He did not condemn her ; no word of denunciation escapes His lips. He holds the mirror of her depraved life before her, bids her look and compelled her to condemn herself. This treatment made her feel herself in the presence of One who read her through and through, knew her thoroughly and she exclaims, "I perceive that thou art a prophet." It is common for religious teachers to denounce sinners, brand them with hard names, and thunder damnation in their ears. But this will never make the sinner feel the divinity of your mission. Touch on their history as Christ did, that their lives shall re-appear to themselves for their own conscience to judge and condemn, and they will be likely to feel that you are a messenger from God. It was thus that Nathan brought David to condemn himself and prepare him for the reception of forgiveness. Oh for the skill so to treat sinners that they shall feel we are sent of God ; that we are in God's place and they inwardly feel concerning us, "I perceive that thou art a prophet." When this is the case they will listen to us as the ministers of God.

Another thing observable and demanding our attention in this method is—

IV. HE GAVE SUCH A REVELATION OF WORSHIP AND HIMSELF AS SILENCED HER CONTROVERSY. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain ; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Here she indicates a disposition to go into discussion as to the merits of various places of worship. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain," that is, mount Gerizim ; to which perhaps she pointed, a mountain rising very near to Jacob's well and overlooking the tower of Sychar. On the summit the Samaritans had reared their temple, while the Jews worshipped at Jerusalem. Half-educated minds are always fond of controversy. The less the spirit of religion one has, the more disposed the intellect is to discuss the letter and the ritual. Christ puts an end to this.

First : *By a revelation of true worship.* He gives the true Object and Mode of worship. The Object is a Spirit, a Father ; and the Mode is to be in spirit and reality. Such a theory of worship as this was sufficient to dissipate all ideas of place, period, or ritual in connection with worship. Before the true idea of worship, your conventicles and churches, your Gerizims and Jerusalems dwindle into insignificance. "God is a Spirit."

Secondly : *By a revelation of His own Messiahship.* "The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ : when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he." I am He that your Moses referred to ; I am He to whom the rites and ceremonies of your own religion point. I can tell you all about worship, and I tell you that "God is a Spirit," &c. Would that the church followed Christ in this respect, and gave people to understand that the worship God required was not a service, confined to time, or place, or ritual, but a service to be rendered everywhere and in all circumstances.

Thus we have briefly indicated the way in which Christ effected the spiritual restoration of this poor ignorant Samaritan, and could a policy more adapted have been pursued. He approaches her on the common ground of human nature. He propounds salvation to her in a way that made her feel its necessity. He so touched upon her history, that she felt the Divinity of His mission, and He gave such a revelation of worship and Himself, that He silenced all controversy about minor matters.



SUBJECT :—*True Spiritual Progress.*

"They go from strength to strength."—Psalm lxxxiv. 7.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Seventy-fifth.

**P**ROGRESS is the order of the day. It pervades everything. It is found in every walk of life. It is breaking up many of our old stereotype notions, and is forcing into notice and practice the newest and best discoveries. Progress

is written on the fabrics that issue from our looms—on the necessities and refinements of life, in fact, almost, on everything we see, touch, and enjoy. All this is done silently. On it goes, like the flow of a deep broad river. Earnest souls have not time to make a flourish of trumpets every upward step they take. They are more anxious about the advance than the noise they make, or the eyes they attract. This is a hopeful sign for the world, and one in which all the wise and good must rejoice. No one who can appreciate the present would wish to return to mediæval barbarism, or fall into Asiatic unchangeableness. Who would not wish our age to be progressive in the useful, the beautiful, and great. So it is pleasant to see individuals progress—to see them rise step by step to the attainment of some great and worthy object. With what delight must God look upon the soul in its Divine advancement approaching nearer to Him, the perfect One. We think the writer of our text had such progress as this in view, and it is this we shall endeavor to illustrate.

Notice the *character* of this Spiritual Progress. "From strength to strength." That is, from one degree of strength to another, or they gather fresh vigor as they proceed in their journey. It is worthy of notice, that the Christian's starting point is strength "from strength." The foundation he stands upon is strength. The hand that holds him is strength. And God that bids him go forward is strength. He has strength within, as well as without. No sooner did he see God's unspeakable love—the unfading glory and wondrous merit of the great atonement—no sooner did the grace of Christ rush into his soul, than he felt "like a strong man to run a race." This was the commencement. Then his heart was full. His gaze fixed on the man Christ Jesus. Firm was his step and humble his heart, resting trustingly on the "Rock of Ages." Such was the auspicious beginning, bidding fair soon to reach the summit of perfection. He seems to leap, to bound forward with an angel's strength. But as we look at him, we perceive that his



speed and strength are less. No vaulting now ; no running even. But we see what is far better perhaps, the slow, measured pace of real progress. Observe that the believer's progress is *Slow, Toilsome, and Certain*.

I. It is SLOW. From step to step. He does not leap at one bound into the perfect state. He is aptly compared to a traveller. Every inch of the road must be gone over, step after step must be taken. High hills and deep valleys, he will find. Up the one he *cannot* run, and down the other he *dare* not ; now and then he has to stand and fight his enemies, or he takes a by path like Bunyan's Pilgrim, which impede his progress. Holiness and heaven are to be obtained slowly—little by little. If we cannot fly or run we must be willing to climb and walk, thankful to go forward, though slowly.

II. It is TOILSOME. It is not only *slow* work, but *hard* work. The ascent is difficult and dangerous, like the ascent of some ice-bound mountains. Painfully does the traveller move upwards. The road with everyone may not be as difficult as we have described it, but every one will find it toilsome enough. How wearily he goes onward. What are those burdens we see upon him ? They are doubts and fears. He ought to have left them at the foot of the cross. Thus he has burdened *himself*, and he feels how painful the march is. Who has not felt how difficult it is, to advance Christward and heavenward—"to grow in grace." Through what glowing fires he has to pass before Christ, the great refiner, can look upon him, and see His own perfect countenance.

The following lines are as true in regard to spiritual progress as they are to worldly progress :—

"We have not wings, we cannot soar ;  
But we have feet to scale and climb,  
By slow degrees, by more and more  
The cloudy summits of our time.

“The mighty pyramids of stone  
That wedge-like cleave the desert airs,  
When nearer seen and better known  
Are but gigantic flights of stairs.

“The distant mountains that uprear  
Their solid bastions to the skies,  
Are crossed by pathways, that appear  
As we to higher levels rise.

“The heights by great men reached and kept  
Were not attained by sudden flight,  
But they, while their companions slept  
Were toiling upward in the night.”

But this progress is not only slow and toilsome—

III. It is CERTAIN. “They *go* from strength to strength.” The movement may be as slow as possible, but it is progress. They rise. They are nearer heaven. They have more of Christ’s likeness. Like the Jews, they may be led round about in the wilderness, but they are nearing home—the holy land. They fall, but rise again, and by His help spring forward and press onward. Thus they take step after step, as though every one would be their last. Yet upward they go, and though slow their progress, it is marked and evident. They reach toward to those things that are before, and press towards the prize. They are to go on until crowned with eternal perfection. Perseverance is promised. God is gradually drawing them to Himself with love, and unloosing the cords of sin from the soul. Thus the weary traveller is cheered with the certainty of progress. He has proved the promise true, for already he can see the distance behind him, though he has measured it painfully. Thus we have endeavored to show that Christian progress is slow and toilsome, yet it is progress in the right direction. This then is the certain way to glory, honor, and eternal life.

In close connection with this we shall now notice *some of the inevitable consequences of ceasing to progress*. The most cursory reader of the Bible will remember that the believer is commanded to go forward—to make progress. He is urged

by the most solemn considerations. The will of God, the delights of holiness, and the crown of life are all held before him, and the words upon each are, "Go from strength to strength." This enforcement therefore is divine and authoritative. But suppose we cease to make progress, what then? We answer, there will be—

First: *Declension*. Not only stagnation, but declension. The wheels of the spiritual life not only cease, but at once begin to run back with fearful velocity. Stationary they cannot be. Declension is certain and inevitable, if we cease to go forward. We must come down from our eminence, lower and lower, until we find ourselves worse than at first. If the soul is not gazing upward and Godward, it will gaze earthward. If Christ, the strong, loving magnet, does not draw the soul to Himself, the wordly magnet will draw it to itself. In climbing to heaven, if we loose our hold of Christ we fall backward. Nothing can keep us up. Many foolishly suppose that they can stand, and neither advance nor recede, but soon have they found that this is absolutely impossible. Ceasing to progress is the same as retrogression. This is one of the certain laws of this spiritual life. There will be—

Secondly: *Loss*. The soul is constantly and largely gaining as it approaches the Source of all good. The nearer it comes to the Sun of Righteousness, the more light it has. Thus the Christian knows more, and feels more, the nearer heaven he gets. He becomes heavenly-minded. Gazing on the unruffled face of Jesus, his own soul grows calm and peaceful. In sight of the happiness to be enjoyed, the cross loses its heaviness. Looking upon the jewelled "crown of righteousness," he forgets his "crown of thorns." Listening to heaven's music, his own song grows sweeter. Knowing that mansions are prepared above, he is less unwilling to leave his earthly one. All these thoughts, feelings, and prospects are increased the farther he advances. What a fullness of joy is this! What exquisite pleasures! What springs of enjoyment! Worlds could not purchase the smallest of them. The Christian has all this, and far more before him; but it is

when he is going "from strength to strength" he has a heavenly prospect and atmosphere. But let him stand still and cease to rise, then he will begin to descend. He will suffer loss at every step, his prospects and hopes will be clouded, and his peace gradually depart. All may depart. How terrible the loss! In this way, Christ is reviled and religion dishonored. The foundations of repentance have again to be laid in tears of blood, and the journey is more difficult than ever. Whenever the Christian comes down from his elevation to the world-level, it is a declaration stronger than words that there is nothing above worth having. So the world takes it. How important, therefore, that our "path be as the shining light, that shineth more and more to the perfect day." What help we require to enable us even to go "from strength to strength"—to make any advance at all; for the way is not only difficult, but our nature is so weak, our powers so paralyzed, and our wills so perverse, that we need God's assistance to progress in the least. How urgent, then, should be our prayers, and how strong our faith in Christ, that we may rise higher and higher, until we reach eternal life. W. DARWENT.



## Biblical Exegesis.

1 THESS. v. 21.

πάντα δοκιμάζετε  
τὸ καλὸν κατέχετε.

*English Version* :—"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

THERE can be no doubt that our translators, in using the word *prove*, intended it to be understood in the old sense of *try*, or *put to the test*. The text, however, is often quoted as if it were a direction to believe nothing without demonstrative argument—a meaning which would be opposed to the whole tenor of apostolic teaching. This sentence is evidently

to be taken in relation to what stands immediately before :—  
 “Quench not the Spirit ; despise not prophesyings.” As if he had said, “But do not go to the other extreme ; do not receive every prophecy with blind assent, but put all to the test, and hold fast that which is found to be good.” Hammond well paraphrases the passage thus : “Try all those who pretend to extraordinary gifts, and examine whether they have them or no, by that gift of discerning of spirits, and make use of those who approve themselves to have what they profess.”

In another passage, which is very similar to that under consideration, our translators have employed an unequivocal word. 1 John iv. 1. “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but *try* (δοκιμάζετε) the spirits, whether they are of God.”

In Rom. xii. 2, the apostle exhorts us to be “transformed by the renewing of our mind, that we may *prove*, (that is, ascertain by trial—εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν) what is that will of God, the good and acceptable and perfect.” The will of God is that Christians should be brought into a certain spiritual condition of purity, of oneness with each other and Himself. The perfection and bliss of that condition they can know only by experience. So in Ephes. v. 10, he says, δοκιμάζοντες τί ἐστὶν εὐάρεστον τῷ Κυρίῳ, “*proving* what is acceptable to the Lord.”



#### 1 COR. IV. 4.

οὐδὲν γὰρ ἑμαυτῷ σύννοια.

*English Version* :—“For I know nothing by myself.”

THE verb, of which σύννοια is the second perfect, properly means *to be conscious of*, and in this context is evidently used in a bad sense ; but in the English version this is hardly apparent to an ordinary reader. The apostle has been speaking just before of the faithfulness required in stewards, and in himself as a “steward of the mysteries of God.” There was a party in the Corinthian Church who were violently opposed to St. Paul. He tells them that his fidelity



as a steward is not to be tried by them. (verse 3.) It is of very small consequence (ἐλάχιστόν) to him what they think of him ; nay, he will not even judge himself. Though if he were to judge himself, he could not condemn himself for unfaithfulness—"I am not conscious to myself of any evil." This, however, is not sufficient for the settlement of the question. He looks beyond the judgment of the Corinthians, and the judgment of his own conscience. "He that judgeth me is the Lord."

The student will notice in the 3rd verse, a singular sense of the word *ἡμέρα*, *day*, correctly rendered judgment in our version. *The day of the Lord*, is the day of the Lord's judgment. (2 Pet. iii. 10.) As it were by a kind of mocking antithesis, the apostle here speaks of man's judgment as *man's day*.



## The Chair of Theology.

[This position we have rather been elected to by others, than arrogantly assumed of ourselves. Studious young men, in and out of orders, are adopting the custom of asking us for information and advice respecting a course of theological study, the choice of books, and the like. The thought has occurred, that it would be for their advantage, and our convenience, to throw such remarks as we are able to offer into a systematic form, once for all, that our correspondents may be referred to a standing document.]

FOR the study of the New Testament, the ancient versions must not be past over. Of these the chief are the Peshito Syriac and the Vulgate. Since the Syriac is a dialect of the Hebrew, the chief difficulty will be to acquire familiarity with the characters and the *two* systems of punctuation. If the student is not disposed to enter upon Hoffmann's quarto (Halle, 1827), he may find B. H. Cooper's Abridgment (Williams & Norgate) sufficient for his purpose. The Messrs. Bagster have published a small Syriac Lexicon, uniform with a Testament ; but the Testament published in quarto by the Bible Society has larger and better type.

Possessed of the apparatus we have described, the student

should now proceed to investigate the words and phrases of Scripture. When language is to be used as a vehicle of revelation, either of two things is conceivable. A diction altogether new, and perfectly adapted for the conveyance of the new thoughts may be introduced, or the diction already in common use may be modified, elevated, and transfigured by the acquisition of heavenly significances, without destroying the earthly and old. It is evident that the former side of the alternative would involve the miraculous impartation, or the laborious acquisition of a new language, in the case of all to whom the revelation was made. The latter side of the alternative is the one chosen, which, besides greater facility, has this advantage, that according to the analogy of Divine dealing with man, it combines the human and the Divine elements. In the diction of Scripture, the presence of both is plainly to be perceived.

In regard to the diction of Holy Writ, some of the things which first strike the student are—

The remarkable absence, except in one or two of the later Books, of terms of technical theology ;

The natural and often material origin of nearly every word which is made to stand for a spiritual conception ;

The elasticity of many of the original terms, which, while they conveyed sufficient information to the earlier readers, are capable of, and are seen actually to bear, a fuller significance in a more advanced stage of physical and mental science ;

The unity of conception and expression which pervades the the documents of Revelation, although ranging through a long succession of centuries. Although new words and notions are added in the latter revelations, the old ones are preserved, and are seen to be congruous and homogeneous with the new.

These facts produce in the candid mind an irresistible conviction of the presence of over-ruling Divine wisdom and power.

In investigating the words of Scripture, the student is advised to pursue some such course as the following :—

Let him arrange, by help of the Concordances, all theological words under three divisions :

(1) Those that are peculiar to the Old Testament, that is, those whose equivalents in the Septuagint are not found in the New.

(2) Those which, originating with the Old Testament, have past through the Septuagint into the New.

(3) Those which are peculiar to the New Testament, that is, which are not used in the Septuagint as translations of any Hebrew word.

It is evident that we have the fullest means of investigating words of the second class ; that even for those of the first class the Septuagint affords much assistance ; but that for the third, we are thrown entirely on etymology, the context, and other passages in which the words occur, in the New Testament, and other Greek writings, especially those of the Fathers.

The etymology of every word of whatever class, is to be carefully investigated by the light of modern philology ; attention also being given to the old interpretations, which, for the Hebrew, when that is in question, may be found in Fuerst ; for the Greek, in Suicer.

Then investigate the context, which will often determine the meaning. Various senses of the same word will sometimes appear in different contexts.

Observe the contextual associations of words, even when the words have no particular separate importance.

When an Old Testament passage is cited in the New, the sense in which it is manifestly understood by the citer is authoritative.

Observe synonyms, and distinguish shades of meaning. Hebrew synonyms will often be indicated by the use of the same Greek word for them in the Septuagint. And Greek synonyms will often be indicated by their standing in the Septuagint for the same Hebrew word.

If a word is habitually associated with others in standing phrases, let this be noted.

In investigating the meaning of an important word, *the first instance* in which it occurs should be well examined, with all the associations and attendant circumstances. For example, Gen. vi. 9 :—"Noah was a *just* (*tsaddik*) (*δικαιος*) man." Again, Gen. xv. 6 :—"And he believed (*vheemin*) (*καὶ ἐπίστευσεν*) in Jehovah, and he counted it (*vay-yachsh'vcha*) (*καὶ ἐλογίσθη*) to him righteousness (*ts'dakah*) (*εἰς δικαιοσύνην*)."

Words and phrases apparently unimportant in the Old Testament may not be so in the New. But in these cases the use of the Old must still be examined and compared.

All prominent theological passages should receive especial attention.

The Prayer Book version of the Psalms sometimes gives useful hints about the meaning of words, and the use of old English diction. Wycliffe's translation of the Bible is sometimes more correct, and often more beautiful, than King James's.

Hints as to the relation of the Hebrew and the Greek may be gained from the Peshito Syriac version of the New Testament. A similar service, though of course less authoritatively, may be rendered by a good Hebrew translation of the New Testament.

In investigating the usage of New Testament words, observe—the usage in the same Book, and then in other productions of the same writer. Then proceed to the Septuagint, if the word be there, and notice the corresponding Hebrew word or words. If you desire additional light, recourse may be had to the Apocryphal Books, and to Philo, Josephus, and the Fathers, by the aid of Grinfield and Suicer ; and lastly, to the Greek classical writers, by the aid of Schleusner. The Syriac as well as the Vulgate version will be very serviceable in regard to the senses of words, and the rendering of passages.

A vast and indefinite quantity of inestimable exegetical matter is scattered in the works of standard English divines ; particularly in Beveridge, Bull, Lightfoot, Joseph Mede, John Smith of Cambridge, Stillingfleet, Edward Chandler, and

Waterland. And some modern writers—as Pyc Smith and Trench, and, amongst the Germans, Stier, Olshausen, Ebrard, and innumerable articles in Herzog's Encyclopædia, will repay a prolonged and careful search.

Important suggestions concerning the doctrinal references of passages, may be gathered from the appointment, in the English Prayer Book, of certain Psalms and Lessons for certain days.

When words and phrases have been well investigated, they should be arranged in groups, and thus gradually and cautiously systematized—not according to any artificial and forced metaphysical scheme, but according to the natural laws of affinity, and comparative prominence.

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## The Christian Year.

BY A CLERGYMAN.

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### *Christmas Day.*

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”—Luke ii. 14.

THESE words, so often heard before, always repeated at this season, never weary us. They come with freshness every time. Why is this? But very few words and phrases, however good, will bear this constant iteration and re-iteration. It is so with Scripture generally, with the Book of Common Prayer, and with a few of our very choicest hymns. Some compositions please us at first, and afterwards seem stale, dull, flat and unprofitable. We could not live upon sweetmeats, but we eat bread every day. The truth of Scripture is the bread of life. It needs no recommendation but itself, nothing to set it off. It pleases best when presented just as it is. One of the greatest charms of the evangelists is their simplicity. They are too much taken up with their subject to obtrude themselves; too full of reverent earnestness to



make a show of their own abilities. Therefore we never tire of the Gospels. Like pictures of the old masters, we recur to them again and again, and find both that their beauty never wears out, and that there is some new beauty we did not observe before.

The angel "brought good tidings of great joy to *the shepherds*." The Gospel at the very outset is "preached to the poor." You remember that when John the Baptist sent from the prison to ask whether Jesus was the Christ, the Lord answered by an enumeration of signs, of which this was the last and the most convincing, "to the poor the Gospel is preached ;" the poor are evangelized. Christ is the Saviour of men, and of men the poor are the greater number. Christ is the Saviour of such as need deliverance, and the mean and needy worldly condition of many of the hearers of the Gospel, is an apt figure of their spiritual poverty. Christ is the Saviour predicted by Isaiah, who declared that He should "preach the Gospel to the poor."

The *angel* "brought good tidings of great joy to the shepherds." Christ's apostles were not angels, but men. The preachers of the Gospel now are human. They who have the same nature as their hearers, the same needs, the same sin and misery, and the same share in the Gospel, are the most fitting preachers of it. They can speak with familiar sympathy. But at the outset, in order to excite the greater attention, and make a brilliant commencement, the Gospel was preached by an angel. Heaven sent forth its inhabitants to show the greatness of the event, to signify the interest which is felt there in the affairs of earth, this inferior province of the Lord's dominion, to illustrate the communion of angels in the affairs of the kingdom of God.

When the shepherds first saw the angel and his glory, *they were sore afraid*. This was generally the effect of those appearances of beings superior to men, which are recorded in Scripture. The terror which an angel strikes into the human breast, is twofold. We have an instinctive dread of the spiritual and the supernatural; we quail before manifestations

of glory and mysterious might, so far more excellent than our own. Then, *as sinners*, we shudder to come in contact with beings to whom sin is unknown, we are rebuked by their purity, and we fear lest they be messengers of vengeance. The first business of the celestial messenger is to remove this dread. He cannot deliver his message with advantage to a man whose faculties are paralyzed with terror. The hearers must be set at ease. Accordingly we often find in Scripture that the angel opens his address with the cheering exhortation, *fear not*.

This angel's Gospel is one of *great joy*. It is not merely good, but joyous ; not barely joyous, but greatly so. Great joyfulness is a test of the Gospel. If a man who professes to preach the Gospel preaches a doctrine which is *not* fitted to produce great joy, believe him not. His doctrine is false. Great joy is also a test of character. A melancholy Christian is a sore hindrance to the church. His foolish and ignorant misery confirms the vulgar error that godliness is gloomy. If he knew the Gospel, he would be happy. If you examine the Creed, you will find that it is *greatly joyful* in every article. "I believe in God the Father Almighty." Doubt is a state of disquiet, and a sign of weakness ; belief is satisfaction, joy, and strength. *I believe*. I believe in *God* : a Being supreme over all others, in eternal holiness and blessedness, and the inexhaustible Fountain of good. Is not this *great joy* ? Is it not *great joy* to have an *Almighty Father* ? So of every article of that most precious Creed. He who can stand up and say with all his heart, "*I believe* it," is, and must be, a *greatly joyful* man.

These good tidings which were brought first to the shepherds, belonged to *all the people* ; and not only to that people of the Jews, but to all the peoples of the earth.

The burthen of the message was *the birth of a Saviour, Christ the Lord*. He was born in the *City of David* ; the fittest place, since David was the darling king of the people, and his memory was cherished with yearning ; the fittest place, because it had been pointed out by prophecy. So far

everything must have seemed to the shepherds right and in its place, and this must have filled them with confidence and courage. What more likely and fitting, than that if a Saviour was born at all, if the Christ was born, He should be born *in the City of David?*

A *Saviour*. One who shall deliver the nation from its present degradation, and bring back old freedom, and privilege, and glory;—a Saviour who shall deliver each of you from inward and outward sorrows, who shall cut off the source, and dig out the root of sorrow, by taking away sin. Christ, so long promised and hoped for, is come at last. This is no deception to lead you to destruction, but the simple truth. Christ the Lord is born; Jehovah, the God of your fathers, who led them by a cloudy pillar through the desert, and dwelt among them between the cherubim, is now once more come down to deliver you; but this time not in a flaming bush, but more advantageously, intimately, and accessibly, even in human form. He is born in the City of David. Go and you will find Him *in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger*.

This angelic Christmas preacher delivered his message alone, but as soon as he had ended, he was suddenly joined by an angelic choir of Christmas singers. Such music has never since been heard on earth at any season of the year. The notes were finer than the tones of the organ, or of the harp, or even of the wind-harp, or of the sweetest human voice, whether woman's or child's. The tune was grander than any of our melodies, but if the shepherds could have remembered it, they would have been unable to sing it. The harmony was perfect. But though the tune of this Christmas music is lost, the words are preserved. They declare and celebrate the results of the wondrous Birth—the *glory of God, the well-being of men*.

All that God does *glorifies* Him, that is, reveals Him for the admiring worship of His creatures. When He spake light out from darkness, and saw that it was good, it was a creaturely shadow of Himself, a ray of His glory. The

innumerable forms of beauty and sounds of music, which in nature delight our senses and rouse our understandings to inquiry, are but so many manifestations of Divine thoughts. He who is the best acquainted with them will in this respect know the most of God. So in His dealings with men, God has made known the beauty of His goodness, the majesty of His justice. But the coming of Christ is God's great work. More of Him is revealed here than any other where. The more we know of Christ, of His words and works, the brighter His glory appears. And as the triumphs of the Gospel increase, and Christ ever more widely softens, and sweetens, and beautifies men's hearts and lives, the glory will increase; until at last, when all enemies are overcome, and the Lord leads His church to the eternal kingdom, it shall shine without let or interruption, more and more brightly for ever.

The birth of Christ was also to bring *peace on earth*. In the diction of Scripture *peace* is a word of wide and deep meaning—comprehending every kind of well-being, and ranging from the mere greeting of Eastern civility to the blessing pronounced by the departing Lord. We may think of *peace with God*, whose mercy has triumphed over our sin, and who reveals Himself in Christ as our Father. We may think of *peace within*—the old war between the conscience and the passions having been at last ended by strength, graciously imparted to the conscience to enable it to recover rightful dominion; of *peace within*—the man no longer distracted by indefinite longings after he knows not what, and tantalized with vain shows, but finding rest in the loveliness and the love of Christ. We may think of *peace between man and man*, which has been interrupted only by our immoderate desires, and will cease when these are under the control of conscience.

The word *goodwill*, in the last clause of the angels' song, does not mean benevolence, but the purpose of God's will which He has *seen fit* to form, and which *pleases* Him when carried into execution. From this last clause—whether we read it as it stands in our English Testaments, or as it appears

in some excellent copies, *among men of goodwill*, we learn two things :—

First: *That the blessing of peace, peace with God, peace within, and peace with our brethren, we owe entirely to the Divine goodwill.* God has sent His Son to accomplish His own decree and make peace between Him and mankind. In fulfilment of the same decree, the Blessed Spirit enters the world of disquietude which is within us, maintains the authority of law, and brings about order and happiness. This is “according to the good-pleasure of His will.”

In fulfilment of the same decree, the Blessed Spirit sanctifies our relations and intercourse with our fellows in the Church and in the world, and we “prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

From the last clause of the angels’ song we learn—

Secondly: *That peace on earth is regarded by God with satisfaction.* War *with* man is against God’s will. The peace was broken by man; it is restored by God, and when restored, delights Him, because He desires our happiness. War *within* man is against God’s will. He takes pleasure in the humble and contrite spirit. War *amongst* men is against God’s will. He willeth that neighbour live in harmony with neighbour, and nation with nation. He predicts a time when “nation shall no longer lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” When God’s word “commanded the light to shine out of darkness,” He “saw the light that it was good.” So, when He “shines into our hearts,” and brings peace and order where was confusion, He pronounces His work to be good. The poet was near uttering a great truth who said

“An honest man’s the noblest work of God.”

Had he put *holiness* for *honesty*, which it includes, he had spoken well. When the Church is at last perfected in heaven, God will delight in her immeasurably more than in all the handiwork of the firmament. His *will*, which Christ came to do, will have been done, *even our* sanctification, and that *will* being *proved*, will be found *good, and acceptable, and perfect.*



# The Preacher's Finger-Post.

## JACOB'S DREAM ; OR, MAN'S SPIRITUAL CAPACITY.

"And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep," &c.—Gen. xxviii. 10—22.\*

REMARKS on the philosophy and uses of dreams will be found elsewhere in the "Homilist." The dream of Jacob, whilst it has the signature of Divinity, seems to have much of the human in its origination. Dreams, like clouds, abound on a troubled atmosphere. The atmosphere of Jacob's soul was very tumultuous the night he reached Bethel. First: *He had just left his home.* The period when the youth leaves the parental roof and goes forth into the world himself, is always one of great agitation. Some of us remember it well. We remember saying "Adieu" to parents whose hearts were too full for speech, crossing the threshold, looking back through floods of tears, giving and receiving the farewell wave of the hand. The desolation of that hour is still fresh in memory.

\* See "Homilist," Vol. VI. p. 396.

We had to take an untrodden path, enter a cold world, and there battle for ourselves. Secondly: *He had just left his home alone.* Sometimes youths leave their home in company with their young companions, who go forth for the first time into the world with them. They cheer each other up in that trying moment, and their talk in a few hours helps to deaden the agony of the wound. Their young poetry soon makes the future so bright that the past recedes into the shade. But Jacob went forth *alone.* He had no ear into which to pour his sympathies, no one whose words could relieve the darkness of the hour. Thirdly: *He had just left his home alone under a sense of crime.* He had practised a falsehood on a dying father, and robbed his brother of a blessing intended for him. His father "trembled" at the enormity, and his brother "wept" at the injustice and his soul cried for revenge. Jacob leaves with the pressure of this crime upon his soul, and with the threats of Esau ringing in his ears. Such was Jacob's state of mind when he reached Bethel and laid down his wearied frame

to sleep, with cold stones for his pillow and the sable heavens for his covering. In his sleep he had this dream. This dream reveals two things.

I. THE EXISTENCE OF A SPIRITUAL CAPACITY IN MAN. He "saw," and "heard," and "felt" things which lie beyond the reach of the senses—things which belong to the great universe of spirit. (1) He *saw* angels, and God Himself. (2) He *heard* the voice of the Infinite; words came unto him fresh from the mouth of the Eternal Himself. (3) He *felt* emotions which mere animal existence could not experience, which the material universe could not produce. Man, thou hast a capacity within thee which connects thee with the spiritual, the Divine, and the eternal.

II. THE AWAKENING OF THIS SPIRITUAL CAPACITY IN MAN. It had been asleep. "God is in this place, and I knew it not." Whilst his soul was asleep he committed those awful crimes; whilst asleep he felt that this earth was everything. In it he lived, and moved, and had his being. He felt and knew nothing beyond it. But now it is awake, it teems with spiritual existences, it is full

of God, it is vocal with the thoughts of the Eternal. Two or three remarks are suggested about the waking of this spiritual capacity now. First: *It is sometimes unexpected.* Little did the patriarch think what a new world would open up to him at Bethel. The woman of Samaria, Saul of Tarsus, the Philippian jailer, are all examples of the unexpected way in which this change takes place in man. Secondly: *It is always Divine.* God came to him in this dream, unsealed the ear, and opened the eye of his spiritual capacity. Thirdly: *It is ever glorious.* Jacob now had a new universe, a new experience, a new life. Fourthly: *It is ever memorable.* He raised a stone to commemorate it. Wherever this change takes place, is a memorable place—a consecrated place. There, is the starting of a new history, the dawn of a new epoch, the birth of a new life.

In conclusion, a word to the worldling. God and His spiritual universe are round about you, and you know it not. You deny the fact, perhaps, because you do not realize it; but you perceive it not because your spiritual capacity is dormant, your spiritual sense is closed in sleep. The man who is born

blind, may say there is no light, no beauty. He who is deaf, may say there is no such thing as sound. Still a thousand orbs light up the world, beauty floods the universe, and melodious sounds float in every breeze. Open the eye and the ear, and he will feel them. So it is with spiritual things.

A word to the godly. How great your privileges! There is a God watching over you, and angels are your attendants. They are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."

"How oft do they their silver bowers leave,  
To come to succor us, that succor want?  
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave  
The flitting skies, like flying pursuivant,  
Against foul fiends, to aid us militant?  
They for us fight, they watch, and duly ward,  
And their bright squadrons round about us plant;  
And all for love, and nothing for reward."

#### GOD'S RELATION TO THE GOOD.

"Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting."—Isa. lxiii. 16.

THE text leads us to consider God's relation to the good in two aspects.

I. As a fact MOST ENCOURAGING UNDER TRIAL.

The preceding verse evidently shows, that the good people who employed the words of the text, were in sore trouble. "Where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies toward me? Are they restrained?" Yet under their distress, they take encouragement in the close and tender relationship which existed between God and them. First: *He is their everlasting Father.* "Thou art our Father." "Thy name is from everlasting." The word "Father" implies—(1) Spiritual causation. He begot them to a new spiritual life. He gave them that new heart and new spirit that constituted them, His children. The word "Father" implies—(2) Spiritual resemblance. Children are like their parents. Like begets like. The good resemble the Infinite in the controlling of the spirit and purpose of their being. The word "Father" implies—(3) Spiritual education. The work of the Father is to educate his children, to train their faculties, to discharge the ever multiplying responsibilities of their existence. God is the great teacher of the good. "Who teacheth like Him?" The word "Father" implies—(4) Spiritual providence. The work of a father is to provide for his children, to make all

the necessary arrangements for their future well-being. God provides for the good. His provisions are varied, abundant, complete, everlasting. Is not this relation a source of the highest encouragement to the good under trial? To have such a Father as this, whose name is everlasting! Earthly fathers die and leave their children orphans. Secondly: *He is their everlasting Redeemer.* "Our Redeemer." This implies—*original captivity*. The best of men were once in moral bondage, once in a slavery worse than that of Egypt. They were servants of sin. It implies—*present deliverance*. That deliverance was effected by God Himself. No arm but His could break the chain, and unbolt the prison doors. He did it, the everlasting One. Earthly friends, who have rendered us services, die, but He our great Redeemer lives for ever. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to day, and for ever. Here then is encouragement for the good. "Can a woman forget her sucking child," &c. "Who shall separate us from the love of God," &c. The text leads us to consider God's relation to the good.

II. As a fact independent of MAN'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT. "Doubtless thou art our

father, though Abraham be ignorant of us and Israel acknowledge us not"—two of the greatest men in Jewish history, the venerated ancestors of the Hebrew race. The idea is that their relationship to God was a fact, whether these great men knew it or not. A good man's relation to God is a fact, independent of the recognition of the greatest men. First: *It is a fact independent of the recognition of the politically great men.* Kings, nobles, heroes, may regard you a pauper beneath their notice; albeit you are a child of God. The fact remains unaltered. Secondly: *It is a fact independent of the recognition of scientifically great men.* Astronomers, geologists, physiologists, metaphysicians may not know you, or may despise you as ignorant and uncultured; albeit you are a child of God. The fact is unaltered. Thirdly: *It is a fact independent of the recognition of ecclesiastically great men.* Primates, bishops, doctors of churches may denounce you as schismatic or heretic; albeit you are the child of God. The fact is unaltered. "Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us," &c. Blessed be the man who has JEHOVAH for his Father and Redeemer. He will rise superior to all the trials of

life, and exult in the prospects of all that may await him in the future.

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#### THE BURIAL OF STEPHEN.

"And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him."—Acts viii. 2.

THERE is a fact here in connection with a dead man not very common.

I. NOT ALL MEN THAT DIE ARE BURIED. The bones of many are left to bleach in the open winds, or rot in the depths of ocean. Some are consumed by fire, some are devoured by wild beasts, and some are thrown into the rivers—as in the case of the Ganges—and left to the mercy of the elements, and the ravenous beasts of prey. God alone knows how many of the human race moulder into dust unshrouded, uncoffined, and unknelled.

II. NOT ALL THAT ARE BURIED ARE LAMENTED. The death of many is felt to be a deliverance, and often, too, where there is the mimicry of sorrow and the pageantry of mourning. Who could lament the death of the tyrant, the oppressor, the persecutor, the churl, or the heartless miser? The lives, alas, that many live here are so thoroughly cold, selfish,

ill-tempered, that they fail to awaken any sympathy in their circle, and their death is felt to be a blessed relief. Few sights are more sad to a thoughtful mind than to witness—as most ministers have—a deceased father, mother, master, committed to the earth, with relations around the grave, with no tear in the eye, no regret in the heart. Their lives had won no love, and their death could draw no tear.

III. NOT ALL THAT ARE LAMENTED ARE LAMENTED BY THE DEVOUT. There is often the sorrow of the worldling and the selfish, because of the secular loss experienced. A politician who has served the temporal interests of his country, a merchant on whose transactions numbers are dependent, the companion who has ministered to the gratifications of others will be lamented, but not by devout men, as such.

Now Stephen was not only buried and lamented, but lamented by *devout* men. Why was this? The following reasons may be suggested. (1) He had embodied their ideal of man. They felt they carried the corpse of one that approached their idea of what a man ought to be. They had witnessed his self-sacri-



ficing labors, heard his noble defence for the truth, and observed the sublime spirit with which he met his martyrdom. They felt they were burying a *man*—not a merchant, not an artist, not a priest, &c.—but a *man*. Well might the devout weep over the death of a *man*! (2) His martyrdom had revealed the iniquity of their age. The moral obliquity, injustice, and heartless cruelty which their countrymen displayed in his persecution, must have filled them with inexpressible grief. (3) His departure was a grievous loss to the cause of godliness and humanity. His zealous efforts and his earnest prayers were over. No wonder that these devout men lamented Stephen's death.

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#### THE POWER OF SATAN OVER MEN.

"When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace."—Luke xi. 21.

CHRIST employs this sentence in speaking of the devil's influence over men, and whilst we remember that it is figurative, we must give to the figure more than ordinary significance, for it is a figure of the Great Teacher whose every word was weighted with wisdom and fraught with truth. Concerning, then, the

devil's power over men, this figure reminds us—

I. IT IS THE POWER OF A STRONG BEING. Our own experiences and the history of the world would lead us to believe this; but our proofs now shall be drawn from the Bible. First: *The names by which the Bible denominates him.* Almost every such title has reference to his power. Apollyon, Beelzebub, Prince of this world, Prince of the power of the air, God of this world. And the creatures that the Scriptures use as emblematical of him are the strongest. The serpent, whose mortal fang stings, and whose awful coil crushes to death; the roaring lion, the king of the beasts of the forest; the old dragon, which was to eastern minds an incarnation of almost resistless power. Secondly: *The work that the Bible attributes to him.* He introduced sin into this world, and is the arch rebel in God's kingdom; he is the leader of the legions of sin in earth and in hell; he "leads the world captive at his will;" he is so mighty, that in the encounter with him even the youths faint and are weary, and the young men utterly fall; so mighty, that to obtain the victory over him the Son of God becomes incarnate and dies; so

mighty, that though he is finally bruised in the head, he bruises the heel of the Son of Man.

II. IT IS THE POWER OF A STRONG BEING, ARMED. The strength of the great enemy is not cumbersome, unwieldy power. He uses "wiles," "depths," "darts," "snares," "all deceivableness of unrighteousness." He suits himself to those with whom he has to do,—arms himself with weapons to which his victims are vulnerable. His weapons are too numerous for description, or even enumeration. The arts, the sciences, the literature, nay, even the affections of men he transforms into weapons wherewith he girds himself and assails our souls. This makes him far more formidable than his mere strength or power.

III. IT IS POWER OVER A VERY PRECIOUS POSSESSION. When he obtains the power he is ever seeking over men, he has power over "a palace." Every man is a palace. Look at his *body*, whether that body be of the ebony of Africa, or the fairer hues of temperate climes, it is a palace "fearfully and wonderfully made," a palace whose "builder and maker is God." Where, even in classic lands and ages, can any palace be

found having such exquisite contrivances as the eye and ear of man, or possessing the beauty and symmetry of the human form. Look at his *mental and moral nature*, and see in the palace such "goods" as palace walls have never contained. What jewels, what regalia, costly and royal, are the memory, the imagination, the reason, the affections. Within us are "goods" of a world rather than of a palace. It is over this "palace," the body, and over these "goods," the mental and moral nature of man, that Satan seeks to obtain power. Sin abuses and degrades the body. The feet, the hands, the eyes, are they not often all employed in the service of sin? And Satan is not content with mere outward service, although he tempts the formalist and the hypocrite to believe that God will be. He lays his loathsome hand on every power of our spirit, every possession of our soul.

IV. IT IS OFTEN THE COMPLETE POWER OF A STRONG BEING, ARMED. Of this complete power of Satan over man, Christ speaks when he says the "goods are kept in peace." There is a conqueror having obtained so perfect a victory, that he holds his possessions in peace. So it literally is with the devil's power over

some men. He gradually extends over them his power, overcoming first in one temptation, and then in another, till the flag of rebellion against God waves from the turret, and the heraldry of hell is emblazoned on the walls of this "palace." So with the countenance of the drunkard, debauchee, and I think also of the wilful sceptic. There are mentioned in the Scriptures two stages through which evil men pass. In the first, they are "servants of Satan," because of the strivings of their conscience, and of God's Spirit, they find some of the commands of sin to be irksome and painful. They are servants, working for wages. Sinning not for the love of sin, but for what they can get from it. Then there are those who become "children" of Satan. Christ calls them the "children of hell." They then anticipate sin, they glory in their shame. Without any sense of com-

pulsion they perform Satan's horrid will. Like a young convict of whom we read, who after a series of precocious crimes that had brought him at the dawn of manhood to the penal cell, and who sat there, not disconsolate and heart-broken, as a man in such circumstances might well be, but with diligent toil rubbing the chains that bound his limbs; his eyes looking with delight in their silver-like sheen. So do some men rejoice in their iniquity. Such is the peace of the man over whom Satan has completely triumphed. It is the peace of an iron slavery—the peace of a fatal slumber—the peace of death. Better far all the horrors of the bloodiest war. In view, then, of such considerations we say, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." "Put on the whole armour of God," &c.

U. R. THOMAS.

*Bristol.*

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## The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

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GREAT FRENCH PREACHERS.

(Continued from p. 297.)

Bossuet was a greater man, but not a greater preacher than his eloquent contemporary. The reputation derived from his vast learning, his controversial ability, his knowledge

of affairs, and his strength of will, we very naturally transfer to his preaching, which was nevertheless of consummate excellence. As an author, especially as a master of style, he surpasses them all, if indeed he does not surpass all who ever wrote in French. The power

of that somewhat intractable language was never more fully brought out than by Bossuet, to whom the crown of eloquence is, therefore, given by Voltaire. He was the orator for courts, and we suppose no prince in ancient or modern times ever had a nobler panegyrist. To learn his argumentative eloquence, we must look to his other works; but in his celebrated Funeral Orations, we have unequalled examples of sublime and original conceptions, arrayed in a diction majestically simple and yet triumphantly splendid. The term which characterizes the discourses of Bossuet is magnificence. We believe it to be admitted by French critics that is style is as faultless as as that of any writer in any tongue.

There are those who consider Massillon the greatest of French preachers; and the award is just, if we confine our regards to simple elegance of style, traits of nature, strokes of pathos, perfect texture of the entire performance and irresistible command of assemblies, and in elocution. Being thirty years younger than the men we just named, he represents a different school, but it is one which he founded himself. When Father Latour, on his arrival at the capital, asked him what he thought of the great orators, he replied, "I find them possessed of genius and great talent; but if I preach, I will not preach like them." Great clearness of thought, perfect sobriety of judgment, profound knowledge of the human heart and of manners, a fund of tender emotion, novelty of illustration, copiousness of language, perspicuous method, and unerring taste, are the characteristics of Massillon. He simplified the divisions of the sermon, and reduced its length, conforming the whole treatment to the most classic models. He is sparing in his citations and unob-

trusive in his array of argument. Beyond all competitors, he dissects the heart, reveals the inmost windings of motive, and awakens the emotions of terror, remorse, and pity. In the ethical field, he excels in depicting vice and awakening conscience, in pursuing pride, avarice, and self-love to their retreats, and exposing and stigmatizing the follies of the great. When the aged Bourdaloue heard him, he pointed him out, as he descended from the pulpit, saying, "Hunc oportet crescere, me autem minui." Baron, the great actor, said of him to a companion, "My friend, here is an orator; as for us, we are but actors." Whole assemblies were dissolved in tears, or started to their feet in consternation. When he preached the funeral sermon of the King, on the words, "Lo, I have become great;" he commenced by repeating them slowly, as if to recollect himself: then he fixed his eyes on the assembly in mourning; next he surveyed the funeral enclosure, with all its sombre pomp; and, lastly, turning his eyes on the mausoleum erected in the midst of the cathedral—after some moments of silence, exclaimed, *Dieu seul est grand, mes freres*. "My brethren, God alone is great!" The immense assembly was breathless and awestruck. Voltaire always had on his table the *Petit-Careme* of Massillon, which he regarded as the best model of French prose.

There are discourses of Massillon, which, with the omission of the *Ave Maria*, and a few superficial forms, might be delivered to any Protestant assembly. The union of simple elegance and strong passion has given his sermons a formative influence in every language of Europe; and they stand at the head of what may be called the modern school of preaching.

Space would fail us, if we were to enlarge upon Fenelon, Fléchier, Bridaine, and other pulpit orators of less note. Chastely beautiful as is the style of Archbishop Fenelon, it is not exactly that which belongs to eloquence. The saintly gentleness of his temper, as well as the doctrines of Quietism which he had embraced, were not the best preparations for passionate oratory. Among his numerous and often delightful works, the number of sermons is not very large. One reason of this may be, that he favored the extemporaneous method, of which, in his Dialogue on Eloquence, he is the ablest vindicator. There is a sermon of

Fenelon's on Foreign Missions, which is full of fine thoughts, and worthy of examination.

The Protestant Churches of France, and of the Refugees, produced some great preachers, of whom the most famous are Claude and Saurin. For solid doctrinal discussion, elaborated into the form of eloquent discourse, the preacher last named continues to be admired. In our own day, there has been a revival of Protestant eloquence, in such men as Vinet, Grandpierre, and Adolphe Monod; and Parisian crowds still follow Lacordaire, Ravignan, Felix, and de Courtier.

DR. ALEXANDER.

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## Literary Notices.

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[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

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### THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,  
Since none can compass more than they intend.

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THE GOSPEL TREASURY; OR, TREASURY-HARMONY OF THE FOUR EVANGELISTS. Compiled by ROBERT MIMPRISS. Two volumes in one. Vol. I. London: Elliot Stock.

THIS harmony is in the words of the authorized version, according to "Greswell's Harmonium Evangelicum." It abounds with Scripture illustrations, expository notes from the most approved commentators, and practical reflections. It has also a very copious index. Attention to the minute supplemental relation of one Gospel to another is a duty that cannot be too strongly urged on the student of evangelical history. This volume, by placing each distinct narrative in just opposition, affords a most efficient help to this. No Sunday school teacher, no theological student, no minister of the Gospel, should be without this invaluable volume. Its price is a marvel of cheapness, and the poorest has no excuse for neglecting the use of such a help as this to the study of the Holy Word.



OUR ETERNAL HOMES. By a Bible Student. London: F. Pitman.

THIS work is divided into seven chapters, the subjects of which are:—What is Heaven; Heavenly Scenery; Death; the Fate of Life; Do the Departed forget us? Man's book of Life, and Infants in Heaven. Heaven is a common theme. A certain class of religious writers and speakers, generally of the mawkish tribe, have always a deal to say about heaven. They seem to be wondrously familiar with its sceneries and its songs, with its tenants and their doings. They are very familiar with the angels and their harps. A book on heaven, therefore, is no novelty and seldom a prize. The little work before us, however, is an interesting exception. It is wondrously free from the platitudes, presumptions, and pietisings of such works. It contains not a little speculation, bold yet reverent, and has a freshness of thought and expression which make its pages pleasant and profitable.

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BAPTISM: ITS MODE AND SUBJECTS. By TYPICUS. London: Jackson, Walford & Hodder.

ANOTHER book on baptism! Will zeal for ritualism never cease? Ceremony seems the only heaven of some souls. They live in the realm of religious materialism. The kingdom of heaven is to them meat and drink, washings and dressings. Will men, calling themselves Christians, ever reach the Pauline state of soul, and thank God that they have had a higher work to do than to baptize? Dip or sprinkle as much as you like babes, adults, or both, but do not write volumes about such menial matters. Oh, let type and speech be the vehicles of those Divine and soul renovating thoughts which the world so deeply needs! Circumcision or uncircumcision availeth nothing, but a new creature in Christ Jesus. We are bound to say, however, that the kind of work the author has set about in this book is done industriously, with considerable ability, and in good temper.

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PREACHING TO THE UNCONVERTED. An Address by the REV. W. S. LEWIS, M.A., Incumbent of Trinity Church, Ripon, and late Chaplain of Trinity College, Cambridge. York: J. Allom. London: W. Macintosh.

THE talented author of "The Threshold of Revelation," a work which we commended to our readers a few months ago, has done well to publish this address, which he delivered at a clerical meeting at York. A more important subject could not have been selected, nor could it have fallen into abler hands. The remarks are sage-like, suggestive, and scriptural, and the spirit catholic, reverent, and tender. Were the preachers of England to do their high work according to the method and spirit indicated in these pages, the pulpit would become the most royal of all the intellectual, spiritual, and social forces of our land.

THE BEGINNINGS OF DIVINE LIFE; a Course of Seven Sermons. By HENRY ROBERT REYNOLDS, B.A. London: Elliot Stock.

WE called the attention of our readers to this work on its first appearance, a few years ago, and we are glad to welcome a second edition. The reason for this cheap edition the author gives as follows:—"The numerous indications that the great Head of the Church has graciously accepted this humble effort to set forth the free and various action of the Spirit of His grace in the renewal of our humanity, encouraged the author of this little volume to believe that an edition of the work, presented in a new form, and at a cost which may facilitate wider circulation, may be found of service by those who are seeking the salvation of the souls of men; and may thus promote the glory of Him, who is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son." We heartily recommend this little volume; it is free from the technicalities of religion, and the narrowness of creeds. It presents the great elements of vital truth, in a language that is intelligible, and with a force that commends it to the common reason, and common conscience of the reader.

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A GUIDE TO THE DAILY READING OF THE SCRIPTURES. London: H. J. Tressider. This is really a good guide. It takes us the shortest and the safest way to the land flowing with milk and honey. Its directions are wise, and its information both interesting and useful. SECRET PRAYER. By REV. CHARLES STANFORD. London: Jackson, Walford, & Hodder. A beautiful little tract on an all-important subject. SANDY FOUNDATIONS. By JOSEPH METCALFE WHITE. London: Jackson, Walford, & Hodder. This is also an earnest and well-written little work. TO EVERY CREATURE; also, JESUS REVEALING THE HEART OF GOD. By J. PULSFORD. London: Elliot Stock. The productions of Mr. Pulsford's pen are always thoughtful, suggestive and hallowing. TWO YEARS AFTER AND ONWARDS. By the Author of "The Coming Struggle." London: Houlston & Wright. We cannot say how much truth there is in this volume, for it is not given to us to know "the times and the seasons;" but there is some decent writing in it. We confess to an utter want of faith or interest in such productions.





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